

Oberjatzberg



THE HISTORY OF A MOUNTAIN

(From Judith Plaiter until today)

BY JOSEF GEISS, BERCHTESGADEN

OBERSALZBERG

The History of a Mountain

(From Judith Platter until to-day)

A

True Account

by

JOSEF GEISS

PUBLISHER: JOSEF GEISS, BERCHTESGADEN



P R E F A C E
to the 1st Edition

During the years after 1945 countless resort and summer guests have learnt to know and love the beautiful Berchtesgaden country and probably all of them visited the Obersalzberg during their stay here. It is not known what reason they had to look at the once "holy mountain". So many stories were told of the Obersalzberg, some of them were almost unbelievable.

The truth of the past could not be found in the ruins. The casual guides — most of them came to Berchtesgaden after the war — made believe that their stories were authentic, but they often knew less than the visitors themselves. They told fairy tales or were exaggerating. But even in the year 1951 accounts in German and foreign newspapers showed little knowledge.

In order to give the guests in Berchtesgaden a true picture of the history of the Obersalzberg — especially of the extensive and extraordinary construction work of Martin Bormann, I undertook to write down my knowledge and experience of that time, in order to serve the truth.

Berchtesgaden, Summer 1955

Josef Geiss



JOSEF GEISS

Bookseller and publisher, was in consequence of his official duty very well acquainted with the conditions of the Obersalzberg. His memories, that he wrote down in this little book, are of historical value. After the Second World War, Josef Geiss, who died in August 1967, dedicated his work, among other things to the comunal policy. He was member of the rual district of the SPD. His work concerned the prosperity of the Berchtesgaden district.

In memory of

Dipl. Ing. GEORG GRETHLEIN

and laborer JOSEF LOHR

who were killed on the 5th of May 1945

PREFACE

to the 2nd Edition

This Booklet in question was accepted gratefully. Within 3 years the first edition was sold out, though neither money was spent on ads, nor any other publicity was used. The "Obersalzberg" book only became popular by the many readers, most of them were guests and friends of the beautiful Berchtesgaden country. They all bought this booklet, not because they expected a political sensation — which they would not find — but because they wanted to learn the truth about the Obersalzberg, which they did find. When now the second edition is available, considerably revised and enlarged in reference to the parts "Obersalzberg" and "Mauritia Mayer" (Judith Platter) — then it is due to the fact that the Booklet was honestly and heartily welcomed by so many readers.

Therefore, with this new edition, I want to fulfill the wish of an enormous number of readers, herewith expressing my gratitude to the admirers of our Mauritia, our Moritz, of Judith Platter, and to all friends of the Obersalzberg and the Berchtesgaden country.

Berchtesgaden — Summer 1958

Josef Geiss

I

BERCHTESGADEN

There will not be many people, who have never read or heard about Berchtesgaden, or perhaps seen it. And there will be many, who have looked up a map and found the idyllic and historical village, which is located in the south-eastern corner of Bavaria, unique and beautiful Berchtesgaden.

In his book: "Das Berchtesgadener Land im Wandel der Zeit" the chronicler A. Helm writes about its origin that the first historical accounts record "this territory had been a frightening barren desert with numerous wild beasts", while "the border lands Bad Reichenhall and Salzburg had a very distinguished and remarkable culture".

The chronicler denies that the Augustiner monks, led by Eberwein, who later became the first prior of Berchtesgaden, were the first human beings in Berchtesgaden. Also Ludwig Ganghofer writes in his novel "Die Martinsklause" that Eberwein found the "Landvogt Watze" with his cruel sons, and fishermen, shepherds, and peasants in the Berchtesgaden country, which at that time was owned by the Bavarian Dukes.

Around the year 700 Duke Theodor gave the woodlands Gauzo and Ladusa — now Goetschen

and Larosbach — in the Berchtesgaden country to Rupertus, Bishop of Salzburg, as a gift. Records from documents and excavations with their findings let Helm come to the conclusion that formerly Celts and Aribonen lived here. A descendant of those families, known by the name of "Perther", built a house — Gaden — where Berchtesgaden of nowadays is standing. Hence the name "Perthesgaden", as recorded in old documents. Other chroniclers and historians interpret "Berchtesgaden" as "Almsgaden" or "Garden of the Poor-Ones", also a reasonable presumption, since Berchtesgaden even in its wilderness must always have given the impression of a lovely garden, and of course even in the old days enough poor people existed.

However, in the beginning of the 12th century, four Augustiner canons from the monastery Rottenbuch near Peissenberg had been sent to the territory of Berchtesgaden in order to build a monastery. This mission was realized and the settlement Berchtesgaden was founded. Records show that many struggles took place among the neighboring convents and priors. They also tell about an extraordinary warlike character, the Salzburg Arch-Bishop Wolf Dietrich. It is a fact that during his reign 1000 protestants had been persecuted and expelled in the year 1752; the Salt Mines in Berchtesgaden, due to the heavily indebted "Stift" were mortgaged and finally secularized in the year 1802. In 1803 the "Stift" was given to a Duke of Toscana. In 1805 the Berchtesgaden country became part of Austria,



Spring in Berchtesgaden

Photo Lochner



The Berchtesgaden Kur-garden with Castle, Stifts-Church and Lockstein

Photo Lochner

but only 4 years later, on the 14th of October 1609, by the "Peace of Vienna" Berchtesgaden was reunited with the Land Bavaria and finally annexed in 1810.

Now the very development of Berchtesgaden began. The importance of the Salt Mines increased steadily and a notable home industry in wood carving flourished.

Dear reader! Wherever you may come from, let me guide you through this beautiful Berchtesgaden country!

On our way to this "garden" the first giants of our Alps, the "Staufen" and the "Zwiesel" greet us in Freilassing and Reichenhall. Then at Kirchberg we pass by the Predigtstuhl mountain. Near the pass "Hallthurm" we see the legendary Untersberg mountain (1974 m), its mountain masses rise high up in the air. To the right we find the "Lattengebirge", and in front of us the land mark of Berchtesgaden, the Watzmann mountain (2714 m) greets us, followed by the Steinerne Meer mountains; in the back ground we complete the circle with the Jenner mountain (1874 m), the Hohe Brett mountain (2338 m), the Hohe Goell mountain (2522 m), and the Kehlstein mountain (1834 m) with the tea house, here highest peak: 1885 m.

Furthermore the following mountains should be mentioned: the Hochkalter mountain (2608 m), the Reiteralp mountain, the Schoenfeldspitze mountain (2651 m), the Breithorn mountain (2498 m), and the Funtenseetauern mountain (2578 m).



Richard Voss
the poet of "Zwei Menschen"



A girl
called "Moritz" . . .



So close together and yet
separated forever . . . they were



Edith Mill
as "Judith Platter"

The bright waters of lake Koenigssee reflect the romantic, beautiful, quiet and intimate St. Bartholomae Chapel. Dreaming between mountain giants is Lake Obersee. Who has never heard of the famous Watzmann East Wall, which received its name by the old mountain climbers Kederbacher and Preiss, and which can well be seen from St. Bartholomae? That wall, which brought highest happiness and fulfillment to many mountain climbers also gave distress and even death to some of them. Those, who know Berchtesgaden and its mountains must not forget to mention the lakes on the Steinerne Meer mountains, he must tell of the divine natural beauty of this mountain world, which every year delights thousands of recreation seeking mountain enthusiasts. Whoever climbed only once those intimate shepherds and hunters paths, who enjoyed the splendid alpine flower meadows spreading like colored rugs, whoever watched a herd of chamois, roes, hirsches and other red deer, whoever saw the rigid coldness of eternal snow, ice chapels, gorges, and thundering avalanches, saw in stormy nights the tormented floods of Lake Koenigssee lit by lightnings, and then saw the lake radiant in the sun light like a large blue-green mirror while lying in a boat and dreaming of life's happiness, will know: There is nothing more beautiful in the German country.

But it would be unjustified, if only this beauty would be mentioned. There are still many, many jewels scattered in this Bavarian jewelbox, in



Railroad Station Berchtesgaden

Photo Lochner



Return from the Salt Mines

Photo Lochner

other parts and corners of the Berchtesgaden country.

Inmidst the lavish splendiddness of nature, placed in a wide valley encircled by rocks and beautiful forests, where little foaming torrents are rustling, we find the flourishing little village of Ramsau. Close by Lake Hintersee, brilliantly reflecting the Hohe Goell mountain; the Magic Forest with its wild romance and not to forget the charming Wimbach valley with its rugged magnificence, located between the Watzmann and Hochkalter mountain.

From the road to Salzburg we have a view of the long range Untersberg mountain with its well known ice caves near Schellenberg. On the opposite side the spurs and east walls of the Hohe Goell mountain invite for climbing. Deep in the mountain the miners do their work in the Berchtesgaden Salt Mines, for centuries a source of income to many diligent laborers. The Salt Mines, where salt streaks were discovered near Schellenberg in the 12th century, are the vital nerve of the Berchtesgaden country and its "white gold" seems to be inexhaustable.

Above the Salt Mines inmidst green meadows, created by magic power of a gracious genius, we find the mountain village Oberau protected by the 1491 m high Rossfeld mountain, the ski paradise of Berchtesgaden.

The mountain range between Ramsau and Berchtesgaden approaches the lovely village of Bischofswiesen, beautifully located on the road between Berchtesgaden and Rad Reichenhall.



St Bartholomae Chapel at Lake Kaenigssee with Watzmann East Wall
 Photo Hafner



Lake Kaenigssee

Photo Lochner

The same can be said of Schoenau, spreading like a huge green carpet from the Ramsau valley to the Koenigssee Ache river and almost from Berchtesgaden to Koenigssee.

Worth to be mentioned is also the lovely high valley Maria Gern with its charming hiking paths and the most beautiful chapel within the whole Berchtesgaden district. It is impossible to describe all those numerous lovely hiking paths and goals offered in this vicinity.

Much more could be told about the Blau-eis-gletscher (glacier) on the Hochkalter mountain, about the enchanting hiking paths and climbing tours to the Gruenstein and Watzmann mountains, about Ettenberg and the Almbachklamm, the Faselsberg, Vorderbrand and Hochlenzer, the Scharitzkehlalm, the Gotzen mountains, the Koenigsbachalm with the Schneibstein, the Priesberg, Kahlersberg, Hochkoenig, Hundstod mountains, the Roeth, then about the "Loipei", the origin of the "Buttnmannndl" and "Krampusse" (companions of Santa Klaus), and so on. Many, many more picturesque points of the Berchtesgaden country should be mentioned here.

And yet, in this "divine garden" there lived people, who were not always happy inspite of the beauty of nature.

Ludwig Ganghofer, our unforgettable Bavarian native poet in a series of his wellknown novels about the Berchtesgaden country wrote tales and legends, which do not only prove his writing experience, but also make believe that his stories



Mountain Chepal and village Ramsau with Reiteralpe mountain



Rossfeld with Untersberg mountain

Photo Lachner

are based on actual events and facts. Thus he makes us acquainted with the real past of Berchtesgaden.

It is true that provosts, priors and other rulers of the Berchtesgaden country demanded their tribute or "Zehent" from the working natives in the past centuries by using cruel means and methods.

Even nowadays many farm houses, "Lehen", house- or "Lehens" names remind us of the times of religious struggles, slavery, and tyranny in the middle ages.

Finally, in the middle of the 19th century, Berchtesgaden gradually became known to the external world. New roads were constructed and by a treaty between Bavaria and Austria on the 21st of June 1851, a railroad track was built from Munich to Kufstein and Salzburg, which was the beginning of a new era for Berchtesgaden.

On the 5th of August 1858 the Maximilians train (named after the ruling Bavarian King Maximilian II ob Bavaria) was inaugurated on the route from Rosenheim to Kufstein. Shortly after followed the opening of the total route Rosenheim - Traunstein - border resp. Salzburg, here-with creating a straight train connection Munich-Salzburg - Vienna. (In Austria by Empress Elizabeth Train Company).

This inauguration took place from the 12th to the 13th August 1860. The Arch-Bishop of Munich personally inaugurated the engines and the new track Munich-Salzburg; a banquet was held in the



Berchtesgaden — Market-square with fountain



Romsau-Lake Hintersee — Magic Forest

Munich Glass Palace and a special performance took place in the Hoftheater.

The blessings of this transportation improvement and a long lasting peace time after the war 1870/71 added to the fast development of Berchtesgaden.

Then the Wittelsbacher came to Berchtesgaden, and as many other German royal princes, chose Berchtesgaden as their favorite hunting ground and summer residence. It was the beginning of a fast development for the village and its population. A tourist trade sprang up and increased steadily, and the first hotels and restaurants welcomed the recreation seeking tourists. Berchtesgaden became the goal for many travellers.

But fate selected the Obersalzberg for a special destiny, which will be described in the following chapters.

II

' THE OBERSALZBERG

The mountain spurs descending from the northside of the Hohe Goell and Kehlstein mountains, carrying wide and hilly meadows, are called: details, since within the last seven decades it was Obersalzberg. We want to describe this area in several times the center of historic and sometimes even worldwide events. In the last two decades of the last century it mainly developed to a health resort and as such gained a high reputation.

At the beginning of these accounts I want to emphasize that by writing this booklet no attempt was made to describe world-wide history. I principally object against taking any attitude towards the political affairs on the Obersalzberg. I reject by all means to be suspected or blamed for serving by these accounts — intended or unintended — the development of political myths. I merely state this, because, after the first edition of my book was published, a high government authority believed that I deserve a reprimand in this matter. The many thousands of oral and verbal commendations of readers of the objectivity of my accounts prove that any reproach was unjustified and did not express the public opinion. The few criticizers can be counted on one hand,

and since almost all of them were anonymous they are not worth to be discussed.

My Obersalzberg booklet should neither be accusation nor praise. It should only state facts. People of various political views came to see the Obersalzberg. We better discontinue to suspect everyone who spends his leave in Berchtesgaden as being one of those from "Yesterday", even when on this occasion he visits the Obersalzberg. And we should not call the Obersalzberg a "Pilgrims-goal" of the "former-ones", when every year so many people come to this mountain.

Who really thinks that all those visitors only come to the Obersalzberg to feel some of Hitler's and Eva Braun's spirit? This would mean that the many US Generals, the high foreign politicians, and even many German ministers of our time could be accused of the same intents. Well, nobody wants to assert this. Among the many enthusiastic visitors of the Bavarian royal castles are many opponents of the monarchy. They are good republicans, and would never dream of being considered monarchists, just because they like to see castles.

Let us be more unprejudiced! Do not let us question anyone's right to visit a historical place as the Obersalzberg, and meditate according to his philosophy of life or political tendencies. Probably many visitors have looked at the Obersalzberg from some political angle but it is also true, that the greater part of them wanted to form their own judgment and find the truth. And this booklet



Obersalzberg

1 Platterhof, owner Mauritia Mayer (Judith Platter) — 2 Pension Moritz — 3 dining room — 4 Arnold'sches Kaufmanns Ferienheim — 5 Untersberg Mountain — 6 Kneifelspitze

Photo Lochner

should help to find the truth about the Obersalzberg. It should show no political opinion and should be impartial. Every guest has a right to it.

I knew from the beginning that this publication will be a hot iron. By dealing with this subject, one has to talk, when not about political affairs, but about the political persons of that time.

It was not easy to solve this problem. I did not want to simplify it as so many magazine reporters did, who just wanted to create a sensation by filling the newspapers with thrilling stories about the Obersalzberg, which did not meet the truth. Many readers finally disliked to read these kind of stories.

Since I have a deep knowledge of the true situation of the Obersalzberg I wanted to give a thorough account, however, this mysterious Obersalzberg was considered much more important than it actually was.

I only want to serve the truth, not because my ambition is driving me to do so, but because history and reputation of well-known Berchtesgaden makes it necessary. Any miner in the coal mines of Western Germany as well as any general manager has a right to hear the truth. Howelse could he become familiar with the history of the Obersalzberg and know the truth about it?

I also want to serve the Berchtesgaden Land. The title of the booklet "The history of the Obersalzberg within the past 70 years" is justified, since the following chapters will give a detailed



Alpine Health Resort Obersalzberg (before 1933)

1 Bodnerlehen — 2 Marienhaus — Haus Goering — 4 Forest-House — 5 Children-Sanatorium — 6 Haus Hess — 7 Haus Hudler — 8 Inn — 9 Haus Adler — 10 Fire House — 11 Post Office — 12 Zinken — 13 Resten

Photo Lochner

account of the times, in which a woman by the name of Mauritia Mayer lived on the Obersalzberg. She was the first-one to open a boarding-house on the Obersalzberg, the "Pension Moritz", later "Platterhof", and she was a close friend to Richard Voss, one of Germany's greatest novel-writers. This close relationship, which will be described now, was so deeply rooted in Richard Voss, that his "Judith Platter" in his book "Zwei

Within the past years I experienced daily by talking to guests and buyers of my Obersalzberg booklet that the interest is not only great to hear about the Obersalzberg of Hitlers's times, but that there are many people, who rather like to know about "Judith Platter". They want to obtain a complete biography of her life. The book "Zwei Menschen" has been read by millions of readers after it appeared on the book market, and several films made "Judith Platter" even more popular.

No wonder, that a great many visitors of the Obersalzberg were more attracted by its history and romance and wanted to see where Judith Platter lived, and to find out about her relationship to "Moritz". When by the following chapter, in which I want to give a short biography of her life, the Obersalzberg myth should focuse — then Berchtesgaden can only be proud of it - I honestly hope not to have committed a crime, since my account would be incomplete without covering the whole period of time between Mauritia Mayer (Judith Platter) and Hitler.

At that time the tourist trade sprang up in Berchtesgaden, long before Hitler's time, and I believe it is much more interesting to hear about the "good old times", since they cover many more years than Hitler's "Imperium" did.

We will hear how life had been on the Obersalzberg, how it was later influenced by Hitler, and what became of the Obersalzberg after this calamitous war was over.

III.

MAURITIA MAYER (MORITZ)

JUDITH PLATTER

Until the time, in which our biography of Mauritia Mayer (Moritz) or "Judith Platter" begins, the Obersalzberg was only inhabited by peasants, miners, forest-laborers and lumberjacks. The few farmhouses, "Almen" und "Sennen" were far apart in the extensive hilly territory crossed by ravines and torrents, spreading from the Salt Mines in the valley up to the "Resten" and "Vorderbrand". For centuries the natives led a very poor and hard life. It was impossible to plant grain or potatoes, since the rocky ground did not permit any agricultural work. All efforts to make a living had to be focused on raising cattle and on milk production. Therefore, the male population tried to find a steady source of income by forest work or employment in the Salt Mines. It was no life in wealth, but the natives were very modest and content in their way of living. Deeply rooted in their native soil, they loved their homes and the eternal beautiful nature with its forests, meadows, and mountains, and they led a happy life.

Then one day, in the year 1877, a simple, hard-working and enterprising woman brought a complete change into the life of the Obersalz-

berg. Experienced, mature, and with great plans, inspite of many inconveniences, she had already suffered from, she tried to settle down on the Obersalzberg.

Her start was not easy. The little farmhouse, the "Steinhauslehen", which this resolute woman bought, was built on stony ground and very poorly equipped; it was a so called "Keuche". Her efforts and pains to improve her "estate" met additional difficulties through enviers and other evil spirits, who even existed in those days. Furthermore, she, being a stranger, was not accepted favorably or friendly by the local people. For a long time she was distrusted, while she was busily and competently meeting all those difficulties. And how did she meet them! Not by struggle or hate, but with patience and being unafraid of danger and trouble. With tireless work, good example and never ceasing helpfulness, even at a time when she needed help most.

With these weapons she gradually conquered in long years all opponents and all restraints. The plain woman became a well respected mountain-farmer, towards the end of her days she was even called "Mountain Queen" — the distinct woman...

It was a long and hard way till she received this title of honor, and you will read about her life from her cradle to her grave.

* * *

This story too would be incomplete, if it would not be connected with the figure of "Judith Platter", who Richard Voss created in his novel "Zwei Menschen". There is no doubt that there is some relation between Moritz and Judith. In his memoirs, Richard Voss indicates some secret in the life of this woman of the Obersalzberg, who after her death, became the head figure of his novel, though no details came up and will probably never become known.

I came to this conclusion, when I talked about Mauritia Mayer to still living witnesses as there is the very aged painter Georg Waltenberger — an episode will tell about him later in this booklet —, and to a few women, more than 85 years of age, who served in their youth Mauritia Mayer as waitresses or servants.

They all knew, after searching their memory, many details of the life of Moritz. They told about her extraordinary spirit, her heroic work, her kindness, and adored the human greatness of her exceptional personality. But they all denied any rumours or suspicion that Moritz, after an unfortunate love affair, might have jumped from a rock or committed another kind of suicide. Before we read the biography of "Moritz", we should consider the novel "Zwei Menschen". Then we can easily find out, what might have been an episode of Moritz' life and what might be mere fiction.

The novel itself was much discussed before the first world war and met a heavy critique from



Berchtesgaden boys, neat and
gay dressed in the "Kurz'n"



Two clever boys have their
sunday-morning chat



Festival of the cows



Pretty girls in native costumes
on their way to church

the religious stand point. Many questions arose, whether the persons and their actings were real or not. Only one thing was clear, who was hiding behind the figure of "Judith". Voss himself often told that "Moritz" was the friend of his life, and that episodes of her life appeared in his book. Let us talk about his novel:

Zwei Menschen,

Neighbor children and friends grow up together. **She**, the Judith from the Platterhof, whose parents had died early, and who, in her early youth, had to learn to depend on herself and manage the farm work. She does this by pursuing her aim and living steadily full of plans for the future improvement of her heritage. **He**, the young Rochus von Enna, whom his mother vowed to the priests. Before both separate, destiny interferes.

The night of the promise.

Rochus and Judith undertake a boat ride and enjoy the sunny day together. Farther than intended they row down the river through the valley. All of a sudden a thunderstorm comes and before they recognize the danger, their boat goes to pieces. Hanging on an unrooted tree, passing lamenting peasants, who are unable to help them from the river bank, they are driven through the torrent far away to a place unknown, till they are thrown on the land, completely exhausted and with torn clothes. An old decaying hut is their shelter for the beginning night. There, still frightened and trembling, they consider their

situation. And finally, after feeling safe and out of danger, their hearts meet and they feel their love for each other, not without fighting against this feeling.

Rochus, knowing that his mother wants him to become a priest, believes that a divine power created this situation, in which he finds himself with Judith, and he tells her of his love. But Judith, not believing that she will ever become the wife of the future count Enna, refuses his proposal with all her strength. Now Rochus puts a ring, which he once received from his mother, on her ringfinger promising her his faithfulness. She believes him and smiling happily, she sinks in his arms. Judith is full of love to Rochus and now she knows that she will never love another man.

When the night passes and both remember that at home Rochus' parents must be frightened not knowing what happened to him, they return towards home walking arm in arm. The village is empty, which causes Rochus to ask an approaching woman for the reason of this silence. But the woman, recognizing Rochus and Judith, is scared and points to the church. They do not hesitate to enter and they find the whole community gathered there and praying in a mourning service for those two, whom they believed were dead.

Their reappearance is considered a miracle and is celebrated with great joy. When Rochus dances with Judith, the countess recognizes the ring on the girl's hand, which she had given to

Rochus. Suddenly the mother knows that her desire to see Rochus become a priest will not be fulfilled, when this relationship becomes closer. She invites Judith to her castle and tries to explain to her that it is a sin to tie Rochus to herself. He must become a priest as she had vowed, neither Judith nor any other girl would ever find a place in Castle Enna. Judith bravely admits her love to Rochus and refuses to return the ring, the token of his loyalty, which she would never break.

The countess sees all her plans vanishing. She tries to find consolation in a secret pilgrimage to the mountain chapel Maria Blut, however, the strain and grief ruin her health and she does not return. Rochus finds his mother dying.

Guilt and Love.

From now on Rochus finds no peace anymore. Since his mother died, he never got rid of the tormenting thought, that her death was his fault and he feels guilty. He believes that his love to Judith is the reason for his mother's sudden and early death. Even Judith can not console him and he does everything to avoid her. He decides to go on a pilgrimage to Rome hoping to find peace he needs for his future.

For weeks Rochus von Enna fights an inner struggle for himself. His love to Judith, the promise he gave her, the guilt he feels, and his mother's wish that he becomes a priest, make it difficult for him to decide. But always having his dead mother in his mind, he comes to the

conclusion that he will fulfill her wish and abandon his love to Judith. He writes a farewell letter and begs Judith to understand and forgive him. Then he enters training college for priests in Rome.

After nine years he receives the consecration and takes every effort to become a good priest. Again and again he is in doubt, whether he is really a good priest, since he can not forget his former love. But since his priesthood demands this sacrifice, Rochus, now Pater Paulus, wants to prove himself that his vow and the love to his mother are stronger than all his feelings towards Judith. He requests a transfer to his native village.

The Heart of a Woman Breaks.

After Rochus leaves, Judith continues her life on the Platterhof. From his father she learns that she lost her beloved-one forever. Therefore, when she receives a letter from Rochus, she burns it without opening the envelope. Looking into the flames, she feels as if her love and her heart would burn together with this letter. But she still wears the ring and every day in her hard and lonely life, the ring reminds her of her loss. She wants to wear the ring for the rest of her life — in loyalty — as she had promised. She rejects all suitors and hardens toward life and toward herself. She suffers deeply, but is not able to cry or pray. She turns apostate, but does not hinder her servants to do their religious customs. She only lives for her work and her only con-

solation are her animals, her dogs and birds, that faithfully follow her as if drawn by magic power.

That is Judith's life, when Rochus returns as Pater Paulus after nine years of separation to become the priest of this community. On his way back, when he enters an inn, he experiences the first temptation. The innkeeper tells the strange monk, whose hair is graying, the story of the big flood years ago, when two young people were saved by miracle. "How lovely was the young girl and how distinguished the young man" she tells him, "the Lord himself must have created them for each other. Now they will probably be husband and wife." The woman continues to talk about those two until the young priest leaves and confused continues his way.

Judith! Judith! Judith!

After arriving at his home village he first visits his mother's grave. There he falls on his knees and prays not knowing that a few steps behind him Judith is also on the way to visit the grave.

Judith, though in disagreement with the Lord and the world, had taken care of the countess' grave in regards to her good relationship to Rochus' father. She is not angry with a dead person, though this woman was the one, who destroyed her life's happiness. Thus it happens that at the same time Judith arrives at the grave and she stiffens after recognizing the man in monks' clothes, who, covering his face with his hands, is shaking and bowing over the grave.

She is about ready to step forward and console him, when she hears the priest groan: "Judith, Judith, Judith!" and without being noticed by him, she turns away and leaves. No, she can not console that man, who broke his promise and left her alone. She also does not want to have anything to do with the "priest" Rochus.

From now on she tries to avoid him, she even gives up the Platterhof and finds a new home in the desolate Dolomites at the "Koenigswand". There, with the help of her faithful servants, she builds a new farm and this task fills her life. She even has a chapel erected for her people and here is, where she meets Rochus again.

Pater Paulus has to inaugurate the chapel. Both act as if they have never seen each other before. But their eyes meet and tell many things. Then they have to discuss the inauguration and Judith asks him to do his mission; but she will not be present. Thus Rochus knows, that she turned apostolate and he knows only too well, that it was only, because he was unloyal to her.

After returning to the monastery he confesses the whole story to his prior, who approves his plan to lead this woman back to the Lord. Now Rochus often visits the new farm, but all his efforts to rewin Judith for a religious life are in vain. The same hospitality will be observed toward him than to any other guest, but he is treated like a stranger. In Voss' novel you can read:

"Any time he meets her, he tries with growing impatience that she might open her soul to him. Her door he always finds open,

but that is all. Her private life is closed to him forever. Pater Paulus is a master in the words of the Lord. His voice sounds like a thunderstorm, whom nobody can resist, except the woman in the house on the Dolomites under the "Koenigswalls". She matches him in strength and in power.

Thus the years pass... but he wants to fulfill his mission. Why does she still wear his ring on her finger? At one of his visits, when he continues to stare at the ring, she quietly says: "You often look at my ring. It is my engagement ring. But the young man, who gave the ring to me, is dead. His ring I will wear until I die or even longer as a token of my loyalty to the dead-one. I became a widow, before I could ever be a happy wife."

And no matter how often Rochus comes to the farm he will never make any progress. Judith does not change, her love to Rochus almost turns to hatred.

The Image.

One day a young Italian painter climbing in the Dolomites falls from a rock. Judith finds him and she is affected deeply seeing in him the image of count Rochus. She takes him home and nurses him with all her motherly love until he regains his health. All her abandoned love of the past comes back to life, while she is nursing the stranger. The painter touched by her care, confesses his love to her. But Judith is startled by his proposal and asks him to leave, since she

would never be able to love again. But when he leaves she kisses him on his lips, which are so much alike than the ones of the man she can never forget. Here the novel says:

"It seemed that this kiss would awaken all her restrained mystic longings that by this kiss an obscure change would overcome her."

Indeed, caused by this incident, an old change of her personality begins. This change is also observed by Pater Paulus, who still visits the farm in order to continue his mission, or to unite young couples of Judith's servants. Judith is always present on these weddings, then she stares at Rochus, while he preaches of the holiness and beauty of the holy matrimony.

Once, after a wedding, when Rochus left, Judith collapses. Both had a discussion, which shattered their nerves. Hatred and love fought in Judith, and Rochus used all his strength to win Judith back to a christian life, and he told her again that he had chosen his profession, because he felt that he owed this to his mother. While they argued "they stood so close together and yet they were apart forever".

Despair.

Rochus leaves. Judith has a complete breakdown. Now she knows that she will never see him again. All her strength is gone and she feels exhausted. Life seems to be empty and useless to her. When the evening sun sends his last rays

down to the rocks of the Dolomites and the walls and peaks gleam in deep red color, she is ready to leave: With her last strength she climbs up to one of the closeby rocks. For the last time she looks down into the dark gorge, already overshadowed by the progressing night, comparing it with her own life of disappointments, and then she loosens her grip from the rough stone walls and she falls into the depths...

Judith is found dying and Pater Paulus is called. But he arrives too late. Only for a few moments Judith's beaking eyes look into the face of the beloved — and yet hated — one, then she dies. Rochus is deeply touched; in presence of the servants he tries not to show his feelings, but his face is pale and silently he leaves.

The Last Honor.

Judith lies in state in the prettiest room of the farm house, and all night Pater Paulus silently holds the death watch. Before he turns away from Judith he takes the ring from her stiffening finger. "...and it was hard to get the ring off her hand. It seemed, though dead, she would not surrender it... that ring, which he had given her in the one holy lovenight, promising her eternal loyalty...".

So far the novel of Richard Voss "Zwei Menschen".

* *

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And now Mauritia Mayer, our „Moritz“.

Who was she and what was the relationship between her and the "Judith Platter" from the Platterhof?

I shall try to compare the life of this woman with the story of Judith Platter as described by Voss.

Thus it might be easier to find out how much real life was and where fiction begins. Of course, it can not be prevented that the illusion will be destroyed to find a "Platterhof" on the Obersalzberg, in which a "Judith Platter" had lived, whose life was embittered by a great love and who committed suicide by jumping from a rock. In this point the story does not cover the true event, though both women died suddenly. It might be, that Mauritia really fell in love with the son of a count, who became a priest, which shattered her life because she could not forget him; or that even Richard Voss was the man, whom she loved, but could not marry, not because he became a priest, but because he was married already to his wife Melanie. Richard Voss always kept this a secret. Therefore, the question will not be answered, whether life and character of Moritz offered enough material to Voss to write his novel "Zwei Menschen" or that his knowledge of her life put wings to his phantasy. Voss himself often declared that he created the novel in memory of Maritia — his friend and benefactress. in this case it is certain that he used all the freedom of a poet, and that the book is a product

— and a good product — of his poetic work, in which he combined true events of her life or traits of her character in his novel.

Furthermore, there is to say that the place of action in his novel is not Berchtesgaden or the Obersalzberg, but the Dolomite mountains, though Voss in his memoirs always means Moritz, when he writes about "his Judith". Where do we find the truth now?

This is up to the imagination of the reader.

The following true biography of Moritz may help us.

The life of Moritz deserves to be written down as a part of the history of Berchtesgaden and especially of the Obersalzberg, not only because it is glorified by the poetry of a great German novelist, but because she was a brave, persuasive woman, whose services for the reputation of the Berchtesgaden tourist trade connected her closely to Berchtesgaden.

Maritia Mayer was born on the 25th of November 1833 in Unterwoessen near Lake Chiemsee. She was the first-born daughter of the former "Forstaktuar" Gustav Adolf Mayer and granddaughter of the Royal Bavarian "Landgerichts-physikus" (district-court physician) Dr. Moritz Mayer, who was married to an Edle Anna von Hasel auf Fuerstenstein. Already the selection of her name was odd, because instead of a daughter a son was expected, who should have received the name of grandfather "Moritz". Since the baby



The aged painter Georg Woltenberger sitting in the festive carriage during the grandious parade on Ludwig Ganghofer's 100th birthday, which was celebrated on the 10th of July 1955 in Berchtesgaden. Pretty Mrs. Heiss of Oberau (Denningelehen) was acting as "Judith Platter" (Own Photo)



Hotel Antenberg (Navy Sanatorium)

Photo Lachner

was a girl, the parents decided to give her this name and the child was baptised "Mauritia", but was called "Moritz" throughout her life.

This female Moritz almost would have become a soldier, for who could blame the registrar, when he presumed "Moritz" was a boy and made his entry in the records accordingly. So, one day she was called to the Army. Her father had to explain the matter and only then Moritz could be relieved from being drafted.

Moritz' childhood was happily protected by her loving parents and she had a gay life with her many brothers and sisters. Three sisters and three brothers were born after her and they all lived happily together in Rosenheim and later in Bad Reichenhall, where her father was transferred as a forester. The family around the modest table was becoming rather large and they were not well off with the small salary her father earned. Therefore, Moritz rendered her services to a Miss von Lindwart from Livonia, an elderly sick woman, for whom she worked as a travel-companion and house-keeper in Reichenhall and Berchtesgaden.

In 1873 Moritz bought a small farm of her own, the "Schifferlehen" (Gnotschaft Mitterbach near Berchtesgaden). There she tried to find an economical basis for her future by farming; but she had no luck and did not find any good people to help her. A wicked and often tipsy femal foreigner poisoned her life and shattered her existence. After two years of efforts she became sick and moved to Meran in South Tirol, where she worked as a maid. In 1877 she returned to Berchtesgaden.

For Moritz this was the beginning of a new epoch in her life. Already 44 years of age, experienced and courageous enough to start again, she bought on the Obersalzberg the former "Hofreiter Anwesen" "Steinhaus" or "Steinhauslehen" including the "Almen" at the Kehlstein mountain for the price of 13 500.— Marks.

It was a difficult start, especially because Mauritia, in order to be able to buy the estate, had to borrow money. Besides, the house and the acres were in a poor shape. But Mauritia did not want to give up. She did not care when the natives mistrusted that spinster with the strict look; they did not believe that "such a person" would be able to improve conditions on the run-down farm. Those, who doubted, learnt soon the opposite, when Moritz took scythe and plough working as a diligent mountain farmer, and together with her servants she managed the impossible.

She began to drain the meadows, build paths, and do a lot of other farm work. Then she had the buildings renovated. The "Steinhaus" she converted to a boarding house, out-buildings were erected, and she opened up a restaurant, which she called "Pension Moritz". But the old farm house she gave the name "Platterhof", since one of her relatives had an estate with the same name in Brixen (Southern Tirol), where Moritz in her youth spent her vacations quite often.

Thus with Pension Moritz the first boarding house was opened on the Obersalzberg. Instal-

ation and furniture were in peasant style, but very comfortable and inviting. She knew that this Obersalzberg would be a perfect area to create a place of recreation for health seeking people. The favorable altitude, approximately 1000 m above sea level, the quietness far away from noise, offered enough possibilities to give people new strength and new ideas. The succeeding progress and success are not only due to Mauritia's luck, efficiency and tireless work. Her personal character and her acquaintance with people of all grades of education, who came to the Obersalzberg and were constantly increasing in number, were, without doubt, the principal reason for this development.

Mauritia was a beautiful and intelligent woman. Distinct symbols of her character were her kindness, mental culture and her sense for justice. She liked people inspite of many disappointments, she was a strict catholic without the tint of bigotry. She was always dressed in native costume and had her long dark hair wound around her head in two thick plaits. She passionately loved her animals, especially her numerous birds and her two St. Bernard dogs with their descendants. And it remained that way, even after she was unfortunately hurt by trying to separate two fighting dogs. One of them bit her in her hand and Maritia had to go to Munich for medical care. Some tendons were hurt so badly that her hand never healed completely and stayed crippled forever.

Mauritia was an honest soul, open minded and without any fault. Those, whom she once offered her favor, friendship, help, or any other kind of well-meaning, she never denied her kind heart. Even disappointments could not change her attitude. She attracted people by her kind heart and even managed to turn the few remaining opponents and enviers into friends. Therefore she always had good and noble guests. Her boarding house was not based on a large style. That was not what she had in mind, for she wanted to create an "Eldorado" of leisure and recreation. Her favorite guests were Peter Rosegger and Ludwig Ganghofer. The latter chose the vicinity of the Pension Moritz as place of action for his novel, "Das Gotteslehen". Also members of the Bavarian royalty and members of the family of the Austrian Emperor were some of Mauritia's friends and benefactors. The Bavarian Prince-Regent Luitpold enjoyed his visit, when she offered him a "Stotzen" milk and dark bread. State Minister Delbrueck was also one of her guests, even famous artists and scholars were frequent guests in the boarding house Moritz. The painter Franz von Lenbach painted Mauritia as beautiful "Bergbaeuerin". Johannes Brahms composed several songs in her home and Clara Schumann often entertained the numerous and selected guests with her masterly art.

But her most favorite guest was Richard Voss, at that time about 30 years of age. He is supposed to have played a special part in the life of Mauritia; it was by far more than a mere acquaint-

ance. Voss was probably the guest, who visited her most, and he received enormous help and assistance by Mauritia. This close relationship continued when Voss settled down in his "Haus Bergfrieden" in Koenigssee and even while spending many years in Italy.

Mauritia also opened her home to many poor artists and poets. By her charm and kindness she won more and more people, who adored her. She opened her heart to everyone, but never gave it away.

Now, let the painter Georg Waltenberger tell us about her. He is still living on the Salzberg (1955). He was the one, who, as witness, told me most of the episodes I have described in this book. Mr. Waltenberger reports the following episode how he first met her.

"From my father I could learn what persistence and unwavering perseverance can do. He wanted me to take the same profession he had. My father was a cartograph and trigonometer at the land-registry-office in Munich. There, in 1878 he was ordered by the German-Austrian Alpine Association to compose a detailed atlas of the Berchtesgaden Land. This profession already had become a family tradition, since five of my ancestors had worked as geometrists. Now I was expected to become the sixth. But I wanted to be different. I did not like the dull school rooms of high school, and the strict school teachers. I was much more interested in the gods and goddesses in the antique hall of the Academy of the For-

mative Arts, as a student of Piloty. There they were assembled: Jupiter and Athenae, Aphrodite and Diana, Venus and Mars, Herakles and Aristoteles and many others. I could draw them there as they were; then later, in the nature class, after models; I could draw faces or nudes and at last one could even compose dramatic scenes of the classic antique.

It was in the eighties of the last century, when I once again left the big city to come to the Berchtesgaden mountains in order to paint sketches. In the "Ofental" at the foot of the Hohe Goell mountain I found what I was looking for, a magnifique natural park with rocks and root-stocks, clad with farns and various moss, weather beaten tree-giants, the remnants of a virgin forest. I was happy in this solitude; here I painted and drew pictures all day long.

But alas! The sound of a thunder! Though a thunderstorm in the mountains is beautiful, however, at this moment it was quite undesired, since it forced me to pack all my belongings into my rucksack as fast as possible. I hurried downhill over the "Resten" toward the Obersalzberg. Completely soaked, I tried to find a shelter and I did not know that it was the Pension Moritz, which I found. I knocked at the door. This was a decisive moment for my future life. I probably would never have become an inhabitant of Berchtesgaden had fate not led me to this house. The girl, who opened the door and whom I stammered my wishes, told a Lady:

"A wet man, a painter, is outside and wants to stay overnight". "Let him come in" I heard her say at once. By kindness of Miss Moritz Mayer I was accommodated in a lovely room of her boardinghouse. On the same evening as her guest, I was invited to take part in the conversation among the guests.

I was surprised to find an exquisite society in this circle. Present were: Karl Linde, the painters Gussow, Spangenberg and Knaus, Richard Voss, State Minister Delbrueck, a charming niece of Moritz (Sedlmeier) and a stately looking farmer from the vicinity of Meran, dressed in his picturesque native costume.

They all liked to come to "dear Moritz". She was the one, who had created a sanctuary high up in the lonely mountains. And to me she became a maternal friend and we got along fine. According to her wish I painted the dining room with scenes of the Berchtesgaden fairy tales, such as Emperor Charles in the Untersberg mountain, the Swan Virgin on the Koenigssee, the wood carver, the forester, the "Sennerin" (female cow-herd) and the miners.

Beginning with this first night, weeks and months followed, which I spent in the Pension Moritz and from now on, the Obersalzberg became my favorite sanctuary away from the noise of the city. It became my home."

That is the way it must have been with this "Moritz". How she met her fate with the unbending decision to master and conquer all diffi-

culties, she created a fludium, which everyone attracted, who learnt to know the atmosphere at the Pension Moritz, where art and country-life were combined happily. It remained that way until the end of her life.

Her efforts were tireless to give her guests and servants comfort, and she enlarged her property by buying land. In 1885 she bought the "Lacknermuehle" in the "Gnotschaft Resten" and the "Riemerlehen" with its forests, which she needed for the modifications. She permitted the former owners to remain in the houses until the end of their lives or until they moved by their own will. Moritz gave these concessions to the people whom she dealt with, because she could not but be kind to everyone. Who knew her better than Richard Voss? He was, as he admitted in his memoirs, immortally in love with her and though she rejected him as a suitor, he was still devoted to her, for he owed her gratitude for all the gifts of her heart and her hands. When he was short of money, she gave him what he needed, when he was suffering mentally, he also could come to her for an advice.

"This woman", Richard Voss wrote, "was sheer kindness. Never did a hungry, thirsty or otherwise troubled person leave her door without having been offered help. She nursed the sick people of the far neighborhood and did whatever she could, even when she knew she would only receive ingratitude in return. Whoever got in touch with her, who learned to value and love her, fell for her, could not forget her and remained devoted to her forever."



The renovated "Plotterhof" (Hotel General Wolker)

Photo Lochner

And so it was with Richard Voss.

But sooner and more sudden than anyone had expected, her life ended. In the last days of February 1897 the sun sent his first warm spring rays over the Berchtesgaden country. How good everyone felt after the long winter with its masses of snow on the Obersalzberg! Even Moritz' heart seemed to jubilate and she made preparations to fulfill a long restrained desire. She was longing for the radiant sun in Italy, she intended to see her friends and, first of all, she wanted to visit Richard Voss and his wife. In expectation of this happy event she informed Voss of her intentions and added:

"I come to see you... I hope you feel how
happy I am. Be happy with me
yours Moritz"

But Moritz never made this trip. Her heart had discontinued to jubilate. On the 1st of March of that same year she was found lying dead in her bed. A heart attack had ended her life.

When she was buried on the Berchtesgaden grave-yard near the Franciscan Church, the funeral of the "Queen of the Obersalzberg" was attended by countless people. The unique and magnificent funeral procession proved the love and devotion of the people to her.

The grave of her grandfather Dr. Moritz Mayer became her last place of rest, and a memorial tablet with her name was attached to the tombstone. The next owner of the „Platterhof“ had

this memorial tablet made with Richard Voss' words:

"True in Friendship, wise in advice,
Kind in heart, and strong in action."

In the memoirs of Richard Voss one can read:

"The very day, on which the Judith of my youth was buried far from me in the womb of the earth I began to write my book „Zwei Menschen"."

Who wants to ask about the circumstances between Moritz and Judith? And who would not like to visit the grave of this distinct woman?

"In honor of the memory of Mauritia Mayer
the Judith from the Platterhof."

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Grave of Dr. Moritz Mayer
and Mauritia Mayer (Moritz) on the Berchtes-
gaden grave-yard. (Own Photo)

IV

FROM JUDITH PLATTER TO HITLER

After the death of Mauritia Mayer, life continued on the Obersalzberg and at the Pension Moritz. The younger sister of Moritz, Antonie Mayer, born on the 24th of August 1843 in Rosenheim, at that time working as a governess for a count in Italy (until 1897), inherited the boarding-house and operated it well. Simply and plainly dressed, never in native costume, but charitable and trying to continue the tradition and habits of her predecessor, her efforts were directed to continuously improve the reputation of the boardinghouse. And she succeeded in keeping the former faithful guests in favor of her and even win new-ones, furthermore she was able to gain the respect of the personnel. Coachmen, supervisors, farmservants, farm-boys, cow-boys, cowherds, kitchen-personnel, housemaids, and waitresses had faith in their new master and began to adore Antonie.

There was a lot of work to do, and the personnel did their work very satisfactory. They considered themselves a family, since Antonie was not haughty and they all knew that the acceptance of that legacy meant rather a sacrifice to her than a pleasure. She only accepted the herit-

age on account of her sister and they all wanted to help to turn this sacrifice into pleasure.

Antonie, always dressed in dark and plain clothes, long skirt, the blouse with white frill, a long golden chain around her neck, at which a watch was attached, which she carried in her skirt-pocket, impressed everyone, servants and guests as well as neighbors. When she left her house walking through meadows and paths, she always folded part of her richly embroidered skirt over her arm to protect the hem of the skirt from getting dirty. Inside the house this was not necessary, since the floor was kept thoroughly clean at all times. In the evenings, when the guests had left, the servants arrived with the cleaning tools. The boys held the candel and lanterns and the girls scrubbed and polished. In the early mornings the breakfast guests found the place of culture and comfort in new shine.

Antonie had the same ways with the domestic animals as Mauritia. She kept them clean and well fed and treated them well. She especially liked Moritz' pets, the two St. Bernard dogs. She cried bitterly when one of them became ill by an uncurable ekzema and he had to be killed. Though the unfortunate person, who had been ordered to take the sick dog away, did this during the absence of the other dog, he never could dare to come to the close vicinity of the Pension Moritz again. The outliving dog had scented the "bad deed" and was for a long time very dangerous. He never calmed down afterwards and soon he died.

During her stay on the Obersalzberg, which finally became her second home, the new owner of the "Moritz heritage" continuously endeavoured to serve the memory of Moritz and she used all her strength to maintain and develop the boarding-house. In addition to the numerous distinguished and faithful guests, she gained new ones. "Moritz heritage" was in good hands. And thanks to Antonie, the Obersalzberg also gained new friends. Geheimrat Carl von Linde, who invented the ice boxes and the method of liquefying the air, had also bought an estate on the Obersalzberg. He followed Mauritia's good example and became the next great benefactor on this mountain. In 1884 he purchased the "Baumgartlehen", built the "Villa Oberbaumgart", and in 1905 he created the "Pension Antenberg", which later became a sanatorium for the Navy. At his own expense he had the highway Antenberg-Hochlenzer (C. v. Linde-weg) constructed and made several generous contributions to the community Salzberg. This community also received from him as a gift the "Auerhaus" on the Untersalzberg for the use as an old folks home. He also promoted the construction of apartment-houses and was the driving strength behind the erection of the Protestant Church in Berchtesgaden. The community Salzberg elected him citizen of honor.

With Geheimrat von Linde several other distinguished people took their permanent residence on the Obersalzberg. We know of Kommerzienrat Stoehr, who became citizen of honor of the community Salzberg together with generalmanager

August Rostberg-Kassel, who died on the 13th of November 1945 in Stockholm, Sweden. Both became well known through their charity. Furthermore Wagner singer Terina, the piano manufacturer Bechstein and the painter Georg Waltenberger must be mentioned.

The latter lived in a building near the sled-trail, which later was called "Haus Speer", a wonderful estate with a magnificent view to Berchtesgaden. Finally, the very modest "Haus Wachenfeld" was built by Kommerzienrat Winter from Buxtehude; this house was later owned by Hitler.

More and more mountain houses were built. "Haus Hess" was owned by the director of the Burghausen Wacker factories and named after him. Countess Ruxleben built the "Marienhaeusl". Other houses were erected as there were "Haus Hudler", where later Reichsleiter Bormann resided, then "Haus Adler", a forest house, a restaurant, a post-office and last but not least the children sanatorium of the popular and well known physician Dr. Seitz.

Year after year more and more buildings were erected in the sunny heights of this mountain, all in typical alpine style.

Though several old "Lehen" came into the possession of strangers, life continued in the old Berchtesgaden style, since most of the new owners were former guests, who had visited the Obersalzberg for many years.

There was no change in the old customs, when an industrious life developed on the Obersalzberg.

This is affirmed by Mr. Waltenberger by telling us of the past:

"Well, even distinguished people, who had travelled all over the world, as the once famous pianist Therese Carenno, wife of Eugen d'Albert, were aware of the superiority of this mountain climate, therefore again and again she chose the Waltenbergerheim on the Obersalzberg as her favorite resort, and she was even willing to give performances. Those were the loveliest summer nights, when through the open windows Therese Carenno enthused the listening audience by her splendid musical performance."

Yes, it must have been wonderful at that time. But let us not forget, those were the days and years, in which the world and the human beings around this mountain lived in peace for decades. Miners and farmers were doing their work without being bothered by the rest of the world. They happily saw their wealth increase, even though they had to work hard for it. Though the native people were so accustomed to the beautiful nature that they usually were not aware of it, they learned to see its magnificence, when their daily routine was more and more interrupted by the steadily increasing influx of strangers, tourists, and health seeking guests, who crowded the surroundings and mountains. More and more famous men came to this country, as there was the novelwriter Heinrich Noe, who found that Berchtesgaden was the "Yellowstone Park" of the Bavarian Alps, where the most grandious

sceneries of nature "lie just in front of your door". Prince Max von Baden, the German Empress, the Duchess of Meiningen, and the Duke of Sachsen-Anhalt were permanent guests of Antonie and last but not least Ludwig Ganghofer- who was so enthused of this "Garden of the Lord" that in his novel "Die Martinsklause" he lets prior Eberwein say the following words:

"Master, whom thou lovest
Thou will let come into this land."

This love made Ganghofer desire to remain permanently in Berchtesgaden. But he found little assistance and his hopes could not be fulfilled. With all these famous men a period of technical development started and changed many things. In 1880 the railroad track Berchtesgaden—Bad Reichenhall was constructed and already in the year 1909 628 916 tickets were sold on this route. At the same time the railroad tracks to the border at Schellenberg and further-on to Salzburg and from Berchtesgaden to Koenigssee were inaugurated. But a dark cloud spread over Germany. The long successful period of peace gave room to the first world war with its immense sufferings. Its effects also reached Berchtesgaden and its population. The progress came to a complete stop, this awful war destroyed many an existence, even though the war itself did not come into this country. As so many other enterprise the "Pension Moritz" managed by Antonie, came into difficulties, which even Antonie could not master. In the year 1917 she sold her boarding-house together with the whole estate to the institution of

Princess Adalbert of Bavaria. Until May 1919 the boarding house was part of the navy sanatorium.

Antonie moved to Bad Reichenhall, where she saw the days of the complete debacle of Germany in 1918, and 78 years old, she died after a life of hard work. Two decades of her life she had spent to continue the work of her beloved sister, which is reason enough to keep her in good memory.

On the 26th of May 1919 the brothers Dr. Ernst Josef and Professor Dr. Eugen Josef bought the Pension Moritz. They operated the boarding house until the 27th of September 1921, then some Bruno Buechner took possession of the whole estate, named it "Mountain Inn Pension Moritz" and finally after Voss' novel "Zwei Menschen" was known throughout the country, Buechner changed the name into "Platterhof".

The unsuccessful plot on the 9th of November 1923 brought Hitler to Berchtesgaden. After his being in prison in Landsberg he escaped to the Obersalzberg and kept himself hidden in a small cottage above the "Platterhof". He might have had a reason to come here. For here he found some benefactors and friends. They believed as others that help could only come from a new strong man after this calamitous war. The main pioneer of that time was Dietrich Eckart, the nationalsocialistic poet of "German wake up" and "Storm, Storm, Storm" and many other slogans of the "Third Reich", once well known and now already forgotten. Hitler selected the Ober-

salzberg for his residence and here he wrote part of his book "Mein Kampf".

He started with being a good neighbor, probably on purpose, and by friendly manners he won retainers and benefactors; but he did not care what kind of words he was using. He insulted all politicians of his time hereby hoping to increase his reputation, for example when he said to the mayer of Salzberg: "Papen is a fool and stupid, and Schleicher is a social-democrat. The progress of his politics showed succes already in 1927. when he was able to rent and later pruchase "Haus Wachenfeld" form his step-sister, who presently lives in Berchtesgaden.

And now the decicive destiny in the history of the Obersalzberg began. What Mauritia Mayer, her sister Antonie, Carl von Linde, Bechstein, Waltenberger and other important and peace-loving people had started, namely the opening of Berchtesgaden to those, who were seeking recreation in heavenly solitude, was suddenly discontinued. The scene changed.

Green meadows and forests became ugly sites of construction. Pretty country- and boarding-houses were torn down and modern stone buildings were erected. Instead of peace-loving and solitude seeking resort guests only politicians, people in party-uniforms, and horrible fanatics arrived.

Thus, after the first world war, the second part of Germany's tragedy began. The Obersalzberg became the center of important events. And modifications began, which nobody thought would be possible, and of which we will report now.

I happen to remember Mr. Waltenberger's answer to my question, what Moritz would have said, had she seen what was going on on the Obersalzberg: "For heaven's sake, she would clap her hands over her head and would turn around in her grave. She, who loved the peaceful quietness of the Obersalzberg — and now find barracks on this mountain? I just can't imagine."



Barracks were erected to accommodate the laborers

(Own Photo)

V

THE HITLER HOUSE

Press Hoffmann and Goebbel's propaganda staff masterly managed to promote "Hitler's Berghof" to a pilgrims place by pictures and the necessary glorifying stories. Gauleiter Giessler from Munich even called the Obersalzberg the "Holy Mountain". The name "Berghof" was absolutely erroneous. Usually it is understood that a Berghof is a neat farmbuilding with the characteristics of a mountain house. After its renovation Hitler's Berghof lost these characteristics completely. Hitler's power increased and brought changes to the Berghof. Architect Degano constructed a terrace and small side-buildings. But it still remained the modest house in alpine style. At that time Hitler was satisfied with the modest house-keeping (till 1935) by his sister Mrs. Raubal; within the progress of complete modifications Hitler changed House Wachenfeld into a building of extravagance. Those, who thoroughly knew of all the changes, mean that the building received the name "Berghof" only to keep up appearances of modesty. The population should never find out what enormous amount of money was spent by these reconstruction works. So, everybody believed to have in Hitler a simple man of modest origin as leader of the nation. Our accounts will show, how

those enterprising Party photographers lied, when they published postcards of Hitler's house with the inscription "The small lodge of Volkskanzler Hitler". Before we report of the renovations of the Berghof we want to illustrate the changes in ownership on the Obersalzberg and the unprecedented construction works.

After Hitler became Reichskanzler, the number of guests accompanied by their staff increased considerably. High ranking members of the Party and the government surrounded Hitler all the time. They were accommodated in close-by boarding-houses and hotels. In front of the Berghof the SS-guards lived in barracks. Thousands of people driven by curiosity came to see the house in which their "Fuehrer" lived. The former solitude around House Wachenfeld was gone and loud activities of national-socialistic politics remained.

Rudolf Hess, Hitler's secretary and later on his deputy, was commissioned to bring order into the situation on the Obersalzberg. He began to negotiate with the neighboring farmers and some of them even received high sums after the sales contract was signed. But also expropriation and threats were used against those, who refused to sell their property. Especially good in expropriations was later on the chief of the Partei-Kanzlei and Reichsleiter Martin Bormann.

When Hess had to deal more with political missions, Hitler assigned Bormann to reconstruct the whole territory of the Obersalzberg. That was the hour Bormann had looked forward to. This unique



Haus Wachenfeld, built in 1916 for Kammerzienrat Winter from Buxtehude by construction firm Josef and Stefan Amort, Berchtesgaden



Haus Wachenfeld after its renovation

Photo Lachner

chance Bormann used excessively. Within a short period of time a large territory surrounding Hitler's estate was in the hands of Bormann. Approximately 10 square kilometers, of which about 800 hectares were forests and 80 hectares agricultural land, were "purchased" from private owners, the forest administration, and the community Salzberg, and were then declared "Fuehrer area".

Hitler only possessed the Berghof with its adjacent mountain meadows, and some small woods in the near vicinity, in which narrow paths led to the most beautiful points of scenery. The expenses as well as the costs for labor in his area were charged to Hitler personally and were paid from his private funds. This property was completely surrounded by territory, which Bormann bought. Expanding from the northside of the Kehlstein mountain toward the southern walls of it the so called "Fuehrergebiet" was located, which Bormann had bought in his own name. He disposed of it as he liked according to his plans, and paid all expenses from a special fund, which bore his name. It has never become known, where this money originally came from.

However, Bormann was never short of money to realize his plans and under this condition the huge construction site — Obersalzberg — was created.

Large barracks were erected to accommodate countless laborers. The steep road leading from Berchtesgaden up to the Obersalzberg was enlarged, another road leading via Oberau, deeply



Haus Wachenfeld (the Berghof) during ist reconstruction. In front: "Proprietor" R. Hess

cut into the mountains, was constructed and new plans were realized.

Degano made sketches of a small post-office and a garden, but Bormann started quarrelling with him. So a new architect from Munich, Professor Roderich Fick was dug up, who soon submitted sketches for the new buildings. In the year 1935 the construction works were started by free competition.

The main construction work began with the Berghof. House Wachenfeld received another floor and was enlarged. Wide stairs led to the arcade like front building. From there one could enter the first floor. A gothic hall with heavy pillars of Untersberg marble formed the lobby of the famous conference room and its large picture window with a beautiful view to the Untersberg mountain. One look into this room was sufficient to show that the "modesty" of the "Führer" did not exist.

It would lead too far to describe all rooms and furniture in details. I only want to report that in the first floor besides the large conference room there was a hall, a vestibule, the dining-room, the guard-room, a day-room for the personnel, a large kitchen, a terrace, and two rooms for the adjutants. In the second floor were three rooms for the personnel, Hitler's living-room, his bed-room and his study, four rooms for the permanent body-guard, furthermore five rooms for guests — the so called minister-rooms — and an apartment of the care-taker, who was officially permitted to use the title "Hofmarschall".



Haus Wachenfeld after its second renovation

Photo Lodner



The Berghof after its last modification

Photo Zeitz

The third floor had the same amount of rooms as the second floor and was also used by personnel, guards, and guests.

Underneath the first floor were the garages, and further downstairs the supply-rooms, the heating system and a bowling alley.

Only the best material was used for this building: marble, artificial stone and natural stone as well as the most expensive woods. Windows and lamps were framed with lead. Phantastic lanterns and tile-stoves, furniture in biedermeier or barock style, tables with inlaid mosaic or heavy marble plates, many supply-rooms for food and drinks of any kind, large kitchen with all necessary technical accessories for cooking, grilling and baking purposes, as well as summer porches and a winter garden, furnished with exquisite chairs and tables — this was in short words the equipment. Of course, everything was designed by experts and constructed by specialists. Many things Hitler received, among them especially pictures, books, and other more or less valuable items were presented to him by devoted retainers, fanatics and speculants, or on other occasions.

Part for these valuable items were used as gifts or stored in the archive — also called supply-room — in the basement of the Berghof, where all "honorable citizen documents" of many cities and communities were stored.

Hitler had his own special movieprojector in his house. The films were shown in the large conference room. Of course, only Hitler's staff was invited to these performances.

Within the following years the Berghof experienced many reconstructions and modifications. It is not possible to estimate how many times changes were carried out. Handicraftsmen, artists, architects, and professors made a living here for years. The enormous costs, which amounted to hundred-thousands and later even millions of Marks, were charged to Hitler's account!

The Berghof was not the only place of construction on the Obersalzberg, where large sums of money did not matter. It was just a "modest" beginning of the things to come.

Bormann and Goering followed Hitler's example soon.

Now with every cut of the spade all efforts of Mauritia Mayer and the other pioneers in the development of the tourists trade on the Obersalzberg were eliminated. The Obersalzberg discontinued to be a mountain resort.

VI

MARTIN BORMANN

The "God of the Obersalzberg"

As proprietor of the Obersalzberg Bormann followed his Paladin Hitler. Ranking in the Party on the 4th or 5th place, Bormann was able to influence Hitler to a high degree.

It was known to the public that in the beginning Hitler personally made all important decisions as to the Obersalzberg. Bormann intentionally advised Hitler accordingly. He launched his adjutants into Hitler's staff and personally always stayed with him. Bormann very skilfully increased the influence he had obtained, by carrying out Hitler's slightest wishes and hints, which he often fulfilled before they were mentioned.

Due to his inexhaustable energy and his perfectly functioning office he was always completely informed, even of matters, which did not belong to his responsibility.

Already in 1941 he managed to make himself indispensable and even more so after Rudolf Hess flew to England; then he became chief of the Parteikanzlei and Secretary of the "Fuehrer".

Unfortunately, the German population and most likely the rest of the world did not know, which

important or even decisive influence Bormann had toward Hitler. As chief of the Parteikanzlei and of Hitler's Kanzlei Bormann became Commander in Chief of the Party and the Government. Herewith Hitler was completely under his influence and he trusted Bormann absolutely.

It is known that hardly a letter or any other document reached Hitler without being first censured by Bormann.

One example: A gardener of the Berghof had the opportunity to congratulate Hitler personally to his birthday, whereupon Bormann got in such a rage, that he dismissed this man immediately, a father of several children.

He kept everything away from Hitler, what Hitler might not have liked to hear. He hereby used the printed letters of disapproval: "In the name of the Fuehrer.... The Reichskanzler is sorry not to be able to do anything in your matter". — Whenever a German national submitted a request to Hitler, hoping to find help by writing him directly, he received the above printed letter as an answer. Most cases Bormann decided personally.

A popular old Bavarian proverb says: "Who carries the cross, gives himself the first blessing". How true these words are, could easily be seen on the Obersalzberg and by Bormann.

This mighty man had the former country house of the wellknown and meritorious Dr. Seitz renovated, and converted to his private home. It was located close to the Berghof. There he ruled over the other Party buildings.

His large, two story high "country house" became equipped with every modern comfort. Bormann had an exquisite taste. Wood panelling on the outside of the house gave the building the camouflage of a simple country house, plain and modest. However, the interior was spacious and luxurious.

Oven, stoves, heating system, and lamps could nowhere be found more extravagant, more beautiful or more precious. The children rooms surpassed all imaginations of an ordinary man about rooms of princes or rooms you find only in fairy tales. Even a special children bathroom with a tub of 2 to 3,5 meters with all kinds of luxury existed. Bormann also took the liberty to have the heaviest kind of carpets weaved for his house; even during the war! From the basement to the attic one could only find luxury and extravagance. Without exaggeration it can be stated that never and at no times nouveaux riches or war — or inflation profiteers have afforded similar luxury.

Have not especially people of that kind been reproached by the national-socialists Party and men like Bormann? With the slogan: "Every German must live modestly, no Minister must earn more than 1000 Marks per month", the German people were won and deceived. After coming to power just the opposite happened; everything was done, which was first condemned.

Bormann knew he did wrong. Therefore, he anxiously tried to keep all curious or spying and unreliable persons away from his property. Day



Haus Hudler (for some time Haus Bormann)



The construction offensive began (to the right Haus Eckerbrunn and the former post office)

and night SS guards were protecting the Berghof as well as his "sanctuary". But since he often wanted to have modifications made in his house, people could get a glance of what actually was going on.

Things, which have not become known during the war, were found out after the destruction of the buildings in 1945. But let us talk about it later.

On account of the construction work the population increased immensely. Those new-comers could not be screened within a short period of time. Therefore, to keep up order and peace in the territory and to protect Hitler and the circle around him, a special group was organized. This group of selected Gestapo men formed the permanent body guard of Hitler. The political duty was exclusively performed by the respective RSD (Reichs — security-service —) for the Obersalzberg territory, which in case of emergency, had also an additional guard-company assigned for help. For this unit, which was still accommodated in barracks, new buildings were erected. The construction of the SS-barracks started and adjacent to those barracks buildings for the RSD and body-guards units were completed.

These buildings in one triangle: Platterhof — Berghof — Bormannhaus — required an immense ground work due to the loamy soil and the rocky ground; furthermore, a tremendous amount of material and large expenses. Only first class material was used for these constructions.

In the vicinity of the SS barracks housing facilities for the SS, a drill ground and gymnasium, underground rifle ranges, kitchen and administration buildings, first class cellars and a special movie theater were constructed. In addition to that special bunkers for supplies of all kind were built, mainly reserved for the SS and a selected group of the administration staff.

Bormann was in charge of the Parteikanzlei on the Obersalzberg. The elite "guards" of Bormann's command-post consisted of Party officials dressed in uniforms with gold and silver stripes, who were accommodated in the guests house of the "Fuehrer". This building was formerly one of those small boarding-houses, which in the good old times belonged to the Pension Moritz and the Platterhof. Instead of silence and health seeking resort guests the "Amtswalters" were promenading here now: The conversion of this house to the "Kanzlei" cost more than 100 000 Marks. The "work" of these people around Bormann was considered "war-important". Naturally this circle occupied a permanent UK position (was never drafted).

The 'war importance' and 'productive work' of this Party general staff consisted only of political training and evening lessons within certain periods.

Furthermore, Bormann organized the mass rallies on the 30th of January, the day, on which Hitler came to power, and on Hitler's birthday, the 20th of April. In addition to that, Bormann's Kanzlei saw its task in driving the women of the



Pretty country houses disopeeored... green meadows were changed into construction sites...



Construction of the SS borrocks

Obersalzberg, who were forced to work during the war, to superior production work.

Bormann was by far less modest than Hitler. His competency was boundless. He was considered and he also felt himself as "God of the Obersalzberg", a title, which was often used in important construction committees, and which was meant half seriously and half ironically. Only his orders had to be carried out, especially from that time on, when Hitler was engaged in big political problems. Therefore, there existed neither limits nor obstacles for him in the procurement of money, construction material, and labor.

Extremely clever he used Hitler's favor and all authorization given to him. His lust of power and show-off type character he demonstrated during the whole construction period. Having formerly been an agriculturist, he was passionately interested in the construction and administration of the Obersalzberg estate (Gutshof).

Here he tried again his success as an estate owner and agriculturist. He could easily undertake this risk, since he did not have to care for its rentability.

At the Gutshof Bormann bred mainly horses, the wellknown "Haflinger mountain race", some of this kind is still existing in Berchtesgaden. 60 to 80 horses, most of them mares, should have brought the main profit to this establishment. However, this model agriculturist was not so much interested in having a financial success, but rather to prove to his "Fuehrer" that he also managed to breed horses. Additional branches

consisted of milk production and breeding of hogs. 80 cows and about 100 hogs were kept in modern equipped stables. 200 acres of meadows and agricultural land belonged to the Gutshof, too. Not much corn and rapes could be cultivated in this high situated area and on this not very fertile soil. The Gutshof did not indicate any rentability. Therefore, young cattle were not kept for further breeding, but sold within a few weeks. Only the must and apple press, which also was a branch of the Gutshof, showed some profit. Bormann bought cheap fruit from all parts of the country, of which several hundred-thousand liters of must and fruit-wine were produced. However, they were not sold on the free market. Only privileged party members or party establishments were permitted to buy them.

In spite of the unrentability of the Gutshof the buildings were steadily enlarged and improved. By orders of Bormann the administration buildings were equipped in such an extravagant way that they almost looked like a manor instead of a farm.

It did not matter how much money was spent. For instance, the sewer system of the Gutshof cost more money and material than several one-family houses would have needed. For Bormann the most important thing was that everybody considered him chief-proprietor and that he could humour his crazy passion for constructions.

During the air-raid the Gutshof was only slightly damaged and shortly after could be put into a more profitable operation. It was converted



Road from Platterhaf Hotel to the "Fuehrer area". Left: Matar Pool, SS barracks and greenhouse
(own photo 1939)



SS Barracks: 1 Bormann — 2 Greenhouse — 3 Barracks — 4 Gymnasium
5 Matar Pool — 6 Economical Building

to a hotel combined with some farming and cattle breeding.

Bormann never was a popular Nazi. He treated all other persons as inferior individuals and tools, who only had to obey his orders. As a superior he was arrogant and brutal. The officials and employees of his office, of the Administration Obersalzberg, the construction offices, as well as the people who lived in the later built settlements, were all afraid of him. It was known, that his own children, servants, and even his wife drew a deep breath, when Bormann was absent from the Obersalzberg for a longer period of time.

Mrs. Bormann had born 10 children to "the friend of the big families" and he was only a good father, when he felt like it. How right they were to be afraid of his harshness, proved that he did not even hesitate to beat his own children with a whip. Once, one of his boys happened to fall into a rain puddle. In his rage this "father" went so far to kick his son with his feet.

He did not permit his children to have friends, whose parents were religious. He became furious, when his children told him that school-mates talked enthusiastically about celebrations of the first communion, confirmation, or processions on Corpus Christi Day.

Bormann watched very carefully that all his subordinates, officials, employees, and even people of the later built settlements secede from church.

When now and then he permitted his wife to invite guests to her house, it was he, who selected these guests, who of course could only

be members of the prominence of the Obersalzberg. He considered himself a pasha and the ladies were not allowed to smoke. He chose the topic and he was the one, who concluded the party. He was not a good neighbor. Farmers and house-owners, whom he did not like, had to sell their homes and leave the area immediately.

Once he dismissed a gardener without notice, and he also threatened his driver that he would put him in a concentration-camp, because once Bormann's car slipped and skidded down a few meters on the icy mountain road. He figured this incident as an attempt to assassinate him. He was always under the impression, that everybody wanted to murder him. That driver had to leave the Obersalzberg within two hours.

Bormann was anxious to have only faithful and reliable persons around him. To be sure of that, he kept a staff of personnel, to which not only the RSD but also the administration Obersalzberg belonged.

They were authorized to act as his representative during his absence. An own special administration building was erected but soon after its completion a considerable amount of money was expended for its reconstruction. It is interesting to know that Bormann put many reliable and meritorious "pioneers" from Austria in all important positions. Since those persons probably had not much knowledge, a qualified staff from the "Altreich" assisted them.

Their task was the sending of orders to other commands and ruthless supervision of the con-



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The Interior of the SS Barracks



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struction work. The municipal administration was left to the community Salzberg.

In order to fulfill the demands of the "noble gentlemen" and to have special delicacies available for each season, Bormann had a greenhouse built.

Soil and climate were insufficient for an extensive gardening. But money could do anything. A huge greenhouse with modern heating system gave the possibility to plant flowers for the most delicate taste. While people in the cities and in the countryside had to obey the order: "Plant vegetables instead of flowers!" just the opposite happened here! During the war a heavy hail storm damaged all the glass and ruined most of the floriculture. Nobody thought that during the war the greenhouse would be repaired, since glass was much more needed in the bombed-out cities. But how disappointing! At that time Bormann happened to be in the headquarters of the "Fuehrer". After he was notified of this damage by telegram, the office of the "Special Construction Program of the "Fuehrer" approved the funds, and even more important, the necessary material.

Hundred thousands of people in Germany had no windows in their homes, but on the Obersalzberg the construction work continued.

A new two story greenhouse was erected, a building 120 meters long, leaning against the so-called Goering hill, provided with an excellent air conditioning. In the basement of this greenhouse a champignon farm was planted. But the site was inappropriate. Therefore, later on this

farm was transferred to an old beer cellar in Bad Reichenhall. A champignon expert was discharged from the army to tend these "precious" mushrooms!

Hitler's personal physician — Morell — had prescribed champignons as a diet to Hitler. Therefore, daily fresh mushrooms were sent from Bad Reichenhall to Hitler's headquarters.

Most of the laborers were employed by the construction firms Polensky and Zoellner, Leonhard Moll, Philipp Holzmann, Held & Franke, and others. The machine-, material-parks and motor pools were enlarged steadily. Many brick-yards, cement factories, quarries, sand and gravel pits, sawmills, metal factories exclusively worked for the Obersalzberg. It is impossible to mention all firms responsible for the interior architecture, installation, power and heating system, water system and others.

From Bormann's construction office the sketches were expedited. The proprietor ordered everything personally. He determined his employees' way of living, issued traffic regulations, dispatched Hitler's car convoy. He even decided the employment of the hotel personnel. And how funny! Even the menu at the Platterhof Hotel and of the SS barracks had to be approved by him personally. The employees, technicians, and engineers were not to be envied. Sometimes he demanded the impossible from them. No wonder that the laborers had to work beyond their strength.



The Gutshaf Obersalzberg



Bormann was a restless vital nature of unbelievable energy and immense arrogance. He was working night and day.

Noise of labor was music for his ears. The noise of the pneumatic hammers, the work of the dredgers, the crackle of the machines and the thunder of the detonations in the immediate vicinity of his house did not disturb him at all, neither during his work nor while he was asleep. On the contrary! Everytime the noise stopped, Bormann looked out of the window to find out the reason, and he ordered to keep on working. He could easily get in rage and then he refused to listen to any good advice. In his rage he very often made harsh decisions, which he did not even cancel after he calmed up. When he became angry about a real or just imagined inefficiency, he ordered the dismissal of the "guilty" persons within a few hours. Even firms had to leave the site, remove material and tools within a short period.

Hitler's and Bormann's habits to make their decisions or schedule conferences during night hours caused many inconveniences to people concerned. The officials of the construction committees had to bear most, and so, also their employees had to suffer. It often happened that engineers and technicians, master-work-men and foremen, after having worked hard during the day time had to interrupt their sleep, because Bormann was inspired by a new idea, or the administration wanted to clarify a technical matter.

But I also want to mention that Bormann, inspite of all chikanery, a few times issued to all employees good winter clothing and shoes and once in a while also alcoholic drinks und tobacco.

A two meters high fence was erected around the whole "Führer" territory, which reached from halfway up to the Obersalzberg to the Kehlstein mountain. The territory was divided into two parts. The inner circle, the so-called "Hoheitsgebiet", in which the Berghof and Bormann's house were located, was guarded by SS sentries. The outer circle with the entrances to the extended Fuehrer territory, in which most of the construction sites were situated, was guarded by civilian guards.

The municipal police was replaced by the "Reichssicherheitsdienst" (State Security Service). The usual cometences of the Landrat were assumed by the chief of the administration.

At the entrances to the "Fuehrer" area individuals had to show valid passes to the civilian guards of the RSD (State Security Service). Bormann instructed the guards as follows: "...a minister's uniform is no authorization to pass these gates."

Only people, who worked in the restricted area, were authorized to enter. Relatives of those who lived there, deliverymen or representatives of firms received a one-day or hour pass. Members of personnel, who were unfit for heavy labor, were assigned civilian guards. Among them were some, who took this duty especially strict



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The Berghof' (in front: building of the criminal police)



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Landhaus Barmann (formerly Haus Seitz)

and seriously. Not seldom heavy arguments arose, until a person could enter the "holy mountain".

At distant entrances these sentries had only simple guard-cottages available to protect themselves from wind and weather. However, at the "sacred entrances" big stone buildings were erected. How much money was wasted here, showed the following case:

At the entrance "Klingseck" — Platterhof road — SS Barracks — at the crossroad a sentry building was erected. After its completion Bormann did not like it and it had to be torn down. He wanted to have it on the opposite side of the road, and so it was reerected on the opposite side on a slope descending from the six meters high road. To prevent the building from gliding, it had to be supported by a stone base.

And the costs of the building? Nobody will believe it! The costs of this sentry building were 128,000 Marks, though it was just a stone building with plain coating.

At the same time another building was constructed, the "Hitler-Youth Boarding Home". It was erected at the main road Berchtesgaden — Platterhof near the Antenberg barracks and was a 10 meters wide and about 60 meters long wooden building. The interior was plain. Two rows of heavy oak columns carried a neat timber work, the walls were nicely lined with wood and decorated with iron lanterns. Stylish oak tables and benches filled the room. A spacious kitchen with modern kettles, buffets, built-in dish cabinets and refrigerators completed the building. But it

never served its purpose to provide transient youth groups with a quick warm meal.

It was already during the war when this building was completed. Juvenile tourists groups did not exist any more. They were marching in foreign countries. Thus this place, which was meant for the youth, was destined to become a work shop for a war important home industry, in which the women of the Obersalzberg had to perform their compulsory war-duty. Toward the end of the war the "Volkssturm" had lectures in those rooms.

Hitler had ordered that at any new- or reconstructions the nature had to be preserved. He was much interested to keep up the tree stock, and to protect game and birds. Hundreds of breeding cages and feeding places were established and during the winter time a regular feeding program of game und birds was ordered. During the war the food had to be brought in waggons from the Ukraine. No game hunting was permitted then. Bormann extended this game and bird regulation in so far that the population of the Obersalzberg was not permitted to keep dogs and cats in their homes. In the creation of this natural park Bormann wanted to take an important part. He had an own bee house erected for approximately 100 bee-hives. The natives called the expert, who had to take care of the bees, "Reichsim" and his female assistant received the title "Queen-Bee". However, the bee-farming was not a success. Bormann distrusted the people in charge of the bee-house. The bees



The expensive Sentry-House

"needed too much sugar" and he suspected that the sugar was being misappropriated by his employees. He appointed several chemists to find a drug, which would make sugar unsuitable for human use. One of them succeeded in finding such a drug. It was called "Octosan" and was also used in other parts of the country.

One day it was found out, that the bee house was standing at a place, where the climate was too rough for bees. Therefore another larger bee house was erected, with an apartment for the bee-master and a shed for supplies and tools.



VII

HITLER'S TEA HOUSE ON THE KEHLSTEIN MOUNTAIN

One of the first projects after the reconstruction of the Berghof and Haus Bormann was the well-known Tea House. This building, rocknest, sometimes erroneously called "D-House" (house for diplomats) or later also called Eagle's Nest by the Americans, was only Bormann's idea, who could also influence Hitler to approve the construction of this building.

It is hard to say whether Bormann wanted to find a place, where his meetings with Hitler were less disturbed than at the Berghof, or whether he wanted to present Hitler with a special attention, or whether he wanted to create a paramount house of representation for visits by foreign diplomats. However, certain is that it was not intended to build a shelter "in case of extreme danger". Indeed, the Tea House was never used for military purposes.

There is no doubt that the construction of this building was a gigantic engineering feat, and not only the Tea House but even more the road, which led up to the mountain, was a problem hard to be solved. Tremendous difficulties had to be overcome during the planning and construction



Hitler's Tea-House on the Kehlstein Mountain



Kehlstein Road

Hair-pin Curve with Goell Walls

1700 m a. s. l. not far from the summit of the of the road, which leads up to an altitude of Kehlstein mountain (1834 m a. s. l.). Meter by meter had to be conquered from the rocky ground, many rocks had to be blasted and several tunnels were built. It was a task, which needed the utmost strength of everyone. The laborers were exposed to just any weather conditions. In this elevation the ground is free of snow only for a few months, from about the middle of May till October. During this time hot sun was almost as unendurable as stormy rain.

Over more than two years the mountain road specialists were sweating over this problem till after troublesome work and the loss of a few lives the roof-tree was put up on the ridge in giddy height.

Almost 7 km long, this modern road — with a strong base and asphalt surface — winds up in one hair-pin curve and countless other curves through several long tunnels, now and then passing by steep descending rocks, and then ending up on the parking lot underneath the very summit.

From here a 130 m deep and 3 m high tunnel leads into the interior of the mountain. Special mixtures were used as protection against humidity and a lining with huge natural stones was added. At the end of the tunnel an elevator leads in a 120 meters long shaft up to the summit into the interior of the Tea House. Elevator, tunnel and all rooms of the Tea House were heated by a hot-air system. The doors to the tunnel are made



Terrace at the Kehlsteinhaus with Watzmann Mountain, Lake Kaenigssee and Hochkalter Mountain
Photo Hafner



Kehlstein Terrace towards the Hohe Gaell Mountain

Photo Hafner

of copper and bronze, the elevator is richly lined with shining brass.

The rooms in the building are not very large. There are the dining room, a study, the large tea room, the kitchen, a guard room, wash-rooms, a restroom and a very spacious basement.

Most of the rooms are lined with stone pine or elm wood. Only in the big tea room Untersberg and Cararic marble were used. A fire-place with bronze tiles is especially attractive. Though the power station in Berchtesgaden provides the building with power, a special aggregate in form of a German submarine was installed for emergency cases.

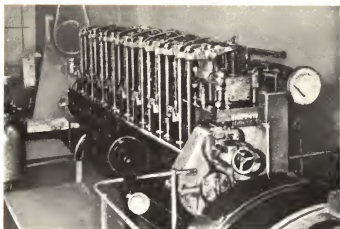
How much did the Tea House cost?

According to the bills of the construction firms its cost was 30 million Marks.

And what purpose did it serve?

It is known that Hitler visited the "Eagle's Nest" only five times, however, Bormann was up there very often. He conducted a few foreign diplomats up to the "Eagle's Nest" and he also spent his Sundays there. Only one special event is worth to be mentioned. It was the wedding of Himmler's adjutant Fegelein with Eva Braun's sister, which also Hitler and Bormann attended. This celebration was kept a secret. But it was known that during this festival, which lasted a whole week and took place during the war, an enormous amount of champagne, liqueurs and lush meals were consumed.

We, who survived the past "thousand years", are happy that this unique building was not



The Power System of the Kehlsteinhaus



The Dining Room in the Kehlsteinhaus (Tea House)

Photo Hafner

damaged by bombs. For several months after the war Berchtesgaden had to fear the loss of the Tea House, since the occupation forces intended to destroy the Tea House together with the ruins of the Obersalzberg. However, the Landrat of Berchtesgaden, Mr. Jacob, objected to this plan, and after the Bavarian Minister-President Dr. Wilhelm Hoegner personally inspected the building and was of opinion that an elimination of this place would be nonsense, he was able to win the occupation forces and the minister advisory council to the idea to leave the whole area as it was. The Bavarian Government then rented the Kehlsteinhaus to the Berchtesgaden Alpine Association, which uses it now as a mountain inn.

Presently, special buses of the Bundespost transport thousands of tourists during the summer months on this Alpine Highway, which starts at the Obersalzberg, and take them as far as the parking lot below the summit. From there the Kehlsteinhaus can be reached either by elevator, or on a short and pretty footpath. Comfortable restaurant rooms invite the arriving guests. One of them is the large tea-room with fire-place, of which after the war pictures with Eva Braun and Hitler were shown throughout the world. Large terraces with a wonderful view to the Salzach valley, Salzburg, and the Austrian Alps as well as the Berchtesgaden country, Lake Koenigssee, and the Steinerne Meer mountains, invite for leisure.

For hikers as well as for private vehicles the Kehlstein road beginning at the Obersalzberg is



Entrance to the Kehlsteinhaus Elevator

closed. But other nice and convenient hikes are possible, as there are the Scharitzkehl road and the tarred road to the northern platform. The Alpine Club is steadily improving and extending this road net. A nice path was also built by the Alpine Club from the platform to the Hohe Goell mountain, and another one up to the start of the difficult climbing routes in the west walls of the Hohe Goell mountain is contemplated.

It may be said that part of the evil Hitler and Bormann did to the Obersalzberg was redeemed by the construction of the Kehlstein building. Nowadays the Kehlstein mountain is a main attraction to the Berchtesgaden tourist trade and it is a unique experience to every visitor, the latter, however, was neither intended by Hitler nor Bormann. If the nazi regime would still exist, no ordinary citizen would be allowed to visit this mountain summit. And would this not be a pity?

VIII

LANDHAUS GOERING

Besides Bormann, Hermann Goering, Reichsmarschall of the nazi regime, was another proprietor on the Obersalzberg. By far more intelligent than Bormann, he gave employees and laborers a correct treatment. He was not despotic and arrogant as Bormann, and he did not give his orders in form of commands. He just expressed his wishes.

Before 1933 Goering owned a small lodge in the area above the Berghof. But then it was not big enough for him any more. The Fuehrer permitted him to enlarge this building. Goering was not so ambitious to surpass the Berghof or Bormann's home with regard to space and equipment, though this does not mean that he built modestly. His peculiarities, his special and often expensive desires had to be considered. Goering wanted to build a beautiful and comfortable home for his wife and daughter Edda. He felt he owed this to his wife, since she, as a successful actress, was used to a noble and elegant life.

The house was prettily furnished but not too extravagant. Goering loved light tinted polished ceilings, which were mosaic like inlaid with flowers, leaves, butterflies, birds, ect. in natural colors. Marble plates and lanterns of brass and

handicraft iron were richly used. In front of the house was the outside swimming pool, inlaid with email clinkers.

The costs of this house have not become known. However, during its reconstruction in the year 1941 350 000 Marks were spent for labor, not included the material and equipment. The funds came from the Special Construction Account Hermann Goering.

Goering often was on the Obersalzberg, though sometimes only for a few days, while Mrs. Goering and daughter often stayed there for several months. The Goering family liked their privacy and seldom associated with the Bormann family or Eva Braun.

Goering, during his visits, could often be seen walking or returning from hunting wearing civilian clothes. In contrary to Hitler he never ordered any road blocks while arriving or departing. Most of the time he was only accompanied by his driver or just a small escort.

The following funny story of Goering should be told here:

It was in deep winter. The aged "Wegmacher Hansei", a modest street cleaner in his sixties, who had a bad leg caused by an accident, was a wellknown outspoken Berchtesgaden "character", who worked on the Obersalzberg road. Full of pedantry he did his duty to keep the roads clean. He did not care what was going on around him, and he was not interested in politics and not in the men who made those politics. He knew no Kreisleiter, no Bormann, not even Hitler. When

"Hansei" was "officially" on the road, equipped with broom and shovel, the rucksack on his back, in which he carried his modest lunch, and Hitler's convoy passed him by, Hansei did not even care to look. He just stepped aside to avoid being overrun by the vehicles. He never rose his hand for a salute nor did he ever lift his hat.

When the convoy had passed by and Hansei perhaps had watched with critical eyes to see the cars disappear, he did not give a thought to this incident and continued with his work on the road.

One day Goering got into contact with our Hansei. Goering's car slid on the icy mountain road and skidded deep into the snow-walls on the side of the road. Goering's and the driver's attempts to get off the snow-wall were of no success, since they had no tools to remove the snow.

Hansei was standing at a distance of about 20 meters from the place of incident, having a rest. He did not think of coming over for help and was just waiting to see what would happen.

When Goering and his driver saw him, they called him for help. But Hansei did not speed up. Finally he approached very slowly. He did not know Goering. When the driver shouted at him to: "hurry up and help digging out the car", Hansei became awfully angry and shouted back: "I... m... a... you "Marktstempen", stay at home when you can not drive in winter", — but then he helped to get the car ready to move.



Landhaus Goering (about 1933)



Landhaus Goering (Reconstruction 1941)

Of course, Goering and his driver were dumbfounded, when this citation from "Goetz von Berlichingen" and the titulation was addressed to them. ("Marktstempen" means a bum or lazybones from the village Berchtesgaden or any other town). But Goering had sense of humor in this odd situation. Soon he was laughing heartily. He was still laughing when he bid Hansei farewell presenting him a big cigar.

Hansei was unconcerned when on the next day he was summoned to appear at Haus Goering. He still did not know, whom he had been talking to the previous day and he did not change his behaviour when he was sitting at Goering's table, where a good meal, a bottle of wine, and a box of good cigars were served. He did not consider this unusual at all. When he left, Goering put a 50 Marks bill in his hands and Hansei thanked him with the following words: "I did not know you were Goering, I thought you were one of those "Marktstempen". I hope you won't mind and thanks. Pfuit di" (Bavarian word for goodbye), and disappeared. Goering laughed again and he really did not mind.

This chapter shows the Reichsmarschall only as proprietor and private person. It does not describe his actions as a politician and companion of Hitler, of which to report is left to the chroniclers. (Note of the author: ... This chapter caused high authorities to express their fear that these kind of stories might create an Obersalzberg myth, as I have already mentioned in my chapter "Obersalzberg". As also mentioned, I do not agree with

this opinion, nor do many readers, as I was told. Goering, of course, was one of the most important men of the nazi regime, but this booklet can not judge those matters.

It will only describe life and situation on the Obersalzberg and it can not be said that Goering or his wife were "ruling" there. Doubtless, they were the only persons of that time, who lived in contrary to Bormann's methods. It should be allowed to state such facts. I cannot construct crimes, which Goering had not committed on the Obersalzberg. So much about Goering in this book.

IX

THE THEATER HALL

and the political atmosphere on the mountain.

The Nazi Regime was aware of the necessity to provide the working individual not only with sufficient income but also with 'mental welfare' in order to keep up their mental and bodily strenght. There will be the opinion that those thousands of employees were in constant training as to Party ideologies. But this was not the case.

Lectures and Party meetings were seldom. Hitler and especially Bormann did not indicate great ambition to have their laborers join the NSDAP and indeed, scarcely 3⁰/₁₀ of the employees were members of the Party. There was not even a local branch of the NSDAP on the Obersalzberg and the Kreisleiter of Berchtesgaden or Gauleiters had nothing to say within this area. Not even the ordinary SS or SA existed there.

Even the German Labor Group was not in Bormann's favor. The employees of the administration were not allowed to join the DAF (German Labour Group).

Only supervisory positions were filled with nazi pioneers or convinced nazis.

It was only important that the buildings were constructed fast and thoroughly. The slogan here



The Theater Hall (with Camp Antenberg)

was not "War", not "Party" but "Work". And in order to speed up the works, efforts were made in entertaining the employees so they would not feel the isolation and monotony so much up here.

Like at the construction sites of the super-highways and in factories of the cities the organization "Kraft durch Freude" (strength by pleasure) was founded here, too. And they really offered a good program, the employees enjoyed the given shows. Only once a week the German laborers had the opportunity to come down to the valley and only once per month they could visit their families. The foreign laborers, when they were lucky, saw their homes only once a year.

Already before the war started, Hitler planned the construction of a large theater hall near the largest laborer camp Antenberg, approximately 1 kilometer west from the Platterhof. This hall was not as important and famous as people made it. Reports of it, which were published after 1945, were more or less untrue. They are part of those fairy tales about the Obersalzberg, which went uncontrolled through the newspapers.

In 1950 one could read:

"Hitler's Movie Theater now Church"
Berchtesgaden Film Palace in Neuhausen.

The reconstruction of the "Herz-Jesu-Church" in Neuhausen, for which baulks and wooden-walls from Hitler's movie theater on the Obersalzberg were used, had to be discontinued some days ago, since no funds are available. Five years ago the long wooden bolts and rafters were part of Hitler's extravagant private movie theater on the Obersalzberg near Berchtesgaden.

In spring 1946 the "Fuehrer" movie theater had to be torn down by order of military government. The huge Hall was carefully dismantled and the baulks and wooden-walls of it were transported over the mountain slopes down into the valley, where they were stored for a long time. Later the Americans presented these "confiscated items" to the archiepiscopal administration in Munich, from where they were given to the Church Administration of Neuhausen, the largest of its kind in Munich with approximately 40 000 members; their church had been destroyed by an air-raid.

Inspite of the limited number of visitors the "Fuehrer's" Film Palace, in which during a period of ten years scenes of "Germany's great days" were shown only to special guests, became the largest movie theater with a capacity of 1000 upholstered seats, within the whole Berchtesgaden area.

Since only the wooden walls and the scaffolding of Hitler's movie theater could be obtained, but not the luxurious inside decoration, the completion of the interior of the church will take a longer time than expected..."

So far one newspaper. — Now the truth! First of all, the phrase "Hitler's private movie theater" or "Film palace of the Fuehrer" is erroneous. As already reported in chapter "Hitler-House", there was a movie projector in the Berghof.

The theater hall was a spacious wooden building suitable for all requirements. Concrete columns and solid wooden props fastened the building to the rocky ground.

Floors and walls were made of wood. There was no wainscoting. The out-walls fitted into the landscape and were covered with rough boards and shingles. Large windows and doors leading to a plain terrace let the day light stream into the hall. Above the swinging stage was the apartment of the maintenance man, who, at the same time was the projectionist. Only the projection room and the mentioned apartment were masoned with bricks according to fire regulations.

Props and supports of the roof were a masterpiece of wood-work. The hall was solidly built.

It stood in a weather exposed area. In winters with heavy snow fall the roof had to carry an immense load of snow. Sometimes the snow layer was even two meters high and in winter 1943 the roof suddenly crushed one hour after a well attended evening performance.

The hall had a seating capacity for approximately 2000 persons. Not one seat of the very uncomfortable long wooden benches was upholstered. No luxury could be found in this building, however, a modern movie projector and a central heating, which was absolutely necessary to get the large room warm were installed. Furthermore, the hall was illuminated by approximately 30 bulbs (each 1 meter long). Only the ceiling and window decoration was valuable. Several hundreds of meters of heavy velvet were folded and adjusted, but probably only for acoustical reasons; and to keep the room dark, expensive curtains were used for this purpose.

Not only special guests, but anyone working on the Obersalzberg, no matter whether they were of German, Italian, Czech, Polish or Ukrainian nationality, could attend the performances, which took place three-times a week. There was no charge for admission. Only a few benches were reserved for the administration people and the wives of SS wheels. During large rallies even those benches could be used by the laborers, since the administration personnel was standing in front of them and their wives were not present most of the time.

Foreign laborers were not permitted to participate in Party rallies as they took place on Hitler's birthday and on similar occasions. The assertion that only films of "Germany's Grand Days" were shown, is not correct. The latest features with the best German movie stars were on the program as there were Marika Roeck, Zarah Leander (at that time already proscribed by the Nazis), Christina Soederbaum, Jannings, Paul Hartmann and Attila Hoerbiger. Goebbels could not influence the movie schedule on the Obersalzberg. The latest newsreel was also part of the program, but it probably was not very favorably accepted by the audience, since most of the visitors arrived after the news-reel was over. After the films were shown in the theater hall, they were shown in other German movie theaters. Sometimes variety shows were added to the entertainment program. There was no "Hitler's luxurious private movie theater"! In fact, Hitler visited the hall only about three times on special occasions.

The theater hall was also the scene of political influence by Party organizations, if those had Bormann's approval. About every two months a lecture was scheduled at which speeches were made by either a Reichsleiter, Gauleiter or a war hero, who was decorated for bravery with the "Ritterkreuz" (Iron Cross around the neck). The Obersalzberg was probably one of the few places in Germany, where those gatherings were not accompanied by applause, yells, and spontaneous or organized "Heil" shouts when a high ranking

Nazi made a speech. The audience did not even salute Hitler in this customary way, when he, in the year 1937 after the completion of the SS barracks, made a speech for the laborers here. He was quite surprised when nobody saluted him when he entered the hall, and the scarce applause after the first part of his speech embarrassed him. Skiffully he changed his speech and finally he won part of the audience, him being probably the only speaker in the theater hall, who ever had such a "success". The laborers by their work always being in close contact with the high ranking nazis, were more critical and more self-confident than those in other parts of Germany. Or perhaps they were just reticent, because usually they were not supposed to salute when Hitler or Bormann inspected the construction sites or passed by them on the Obersalzberg roads. Also a great part of the laborers felt angry towards the regime, since they were forced to work in this isolation, separated from their families. Most of them were no admirers of the "Third Reich". Furthermore, the experiences on the Obersalzberg did not encourage those, whose political interests were more in favor of other political parties. Of course, no-one could dare to demonstrate his dislike. That would have been as dangerous on the Obersalzberg as else where.

The RSD had the order to watch those closely, who were officially known of having been in a concentration camp or who were former members of the Social Democrat- or Communist Party. The construction firms often had arguments with the

RSD, when for example a "politically unreliable" handicraftman did not get the permission to work close to the "inner Fuehrer territory".

Now, let us talk about the hall.

During the air-raid on the Obersalzberg the hall was heavily damaged. After the end of the war there was no-one available, who would have been able to finance the renovation of the hall. It was confiscated by the arriving occupation troops and was later released by the Americans for the reconstruction of the "Herz-Jesu-Church" in Munich.

X

THE PLATTERHOF

and other buildings.

Bormann as chief of the Parteikanzlei, proprietor and farmowner "The God of the Obersalzberg" was not yet on the goal of his plans and wishes. What he succeeded in doing so far, still increased his ambition. In the new plans of Hitler he saw his great chance.

Every day approximately 5000 people came to see Hitler. Hitler enjoyed this. Almost every day he was standing near the road by a young lime-tree, returned the salutes, posed for photographers, and even now and then accepted a written petition. Even later he wanted to continue this habit to Bormann's dislike, who was afraid, someone might contact Hitler without going through his censorship.

Hitler ordered to modify the Platterhof — once his favorite sojourn — into a Hotel, to provide accomodation for all, who cheered him during the day-time.

That was the beginning of the largest construction site Obersalzberg. The Platterhof was torn down during the summer 1938. The NS-propaganda announced that in the close neighborhood of the "Fuehrer" a national hotel would



Construction of the Platterhof Hotel



The Guest-House (Parteikanzlei)

be erected. And here every German, who participated in a "pilgrimage" to the "beloved Fuehrer" would have the opportunity to spend one day and one 'night close to the Fuehrer for 1 Reichsmark only.

Blinded by such propaganga part of the laborers started working. Now and then, dressed in a plain suit and only escorted by a few people Hitler inspected the construction site to see how the work continued and to give some orders. A few times he even talked to some laborers, which made those really believe that they were working on the construction of a genuine national hotel for people. Laborers and employees, detailed from labor-offices of the near-by districts, were forced to serve on the Obersalzberg and here were jammed into barracks. At the beginning of the war, when part of the laborers were drafted, — at that time the UK machine did not function correctly — displaced foreigners such as Polish, Czech, Slovakian and later Italian laborers arrived. The new Platterhof was modified continuously. Once thought as a larger mountain inn, it finally became a fashionable hotel-de-luxe.

Bormann influenced the construction considerably and cunningly managed to deviate Hitler's objections. One example: At an inspection Hitler asked, which room was planned for the bar. Originally no bar was planned, since according to Hitler's dislike of alcoholic drinks, there was the opinion that a bar would meet Hitler's disapproval. Instead of saying so, Bormann replied, that the bar would be established in the

basement underneath the court-yard. And naturally, that bar was placed in the basement, which again caused enormous reconstruction works. The canalization had to be put deeper, a difficult and expensive work, since it was already fastened to the rocky ground 8 meters underneath the bottom. The heavy iron concrete ceiling of the basement had to be pulled down and rebuilt, since the height had to be changed accordingly.

Once Bormann threw the model of the hotel-bar, which almost cost 10 000 Marks, in a corner and it shattered to thousand pieces. The reason: He did not like it! He seldom was able to imagine the effect of a completed building by seeing sketches or models. This disability caused many drastical rages. Then he raved on the construction site until he lost his voice, insulted architects and construction chiefs and ordered modifications continuously.

It was hard for the firms to explain to the construction administration that the estimates of costs were based on normal development and calculation. Since everybody was afraid of Bormann's rages, they did not dare to point out to him the limits of technical possibilities. Fuming about delays, he dashed around like a thunderstorm to discontinue "disorganization and loitering". He also threatened people with the concentration camp. In panic, laborers and engineers were driven to work beyond their ability, without considering the cost.



The Guest-House (Porteikonzlei)



The Plotterhof with construction site of the terrace-hall

Furthermore, many technical difficulties arose, and laborers, engineers, construction chiefs and firms were annoyed. Many a stone, added to the other, and many a trowel of cement were accompanied by curses. Hitler himself once uttered, when he saw parts of the building pulled down and reerected: "If I did not know that so much money has been spent already, I would be able to blow up everything."

Bormann cared very much about Hitler's moods. Now he was enticed to force his wishes without regarding the cost, material and time which were spent, and hindrances which might arise.

At the beginning of the war the buildings were declared "war important construction program" of the "Fuehrer". Military registration offices and even the High Command of the Army had no power to disapprove relief requests of the army for indispensable personnel within the construction program. Hitler had become the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and Bormann was Chief of the construction program. It is easy to understand that during the whole war the construction program could continue undisturbed on the Obersalzberg and that even the healthiest and youngest men fit for duty did not have to serve in the Army.

The completion of the Platterhof was enforced.

The hotel consisted of basement, first and second floor. In the first floor was a spacious reception hall, its floor covered with heavy rugs, lavishly furnished and decorated with beautiful pictures.

A large barber shop and beauty parlor sold the best Parfums, one bottle for 300.00 Marks! (And this in a people's hotel!)

The following rooms existed:

A reading room, the mirror-hall ~~and~~ library, the large dining room, a tourist-hall, the beer-room, a large breakfast-room — its ceiling alone cost about 20,000 Marks —, the Dietrich Eckart room, the Richard Voss-room, a bar, the bomb-proof bowling alley, and guest-rooms with about 150 beds.

A comfortable kitchen with the latest technical equipment, and large cellars completed the huge hotel.

Responsible for the phantastic interior decoration was Professor Michaelis. Government money — or as Hitler often said "Volksvermoe-gen" (people's funds) was spent without hesitation. Bormann had the rooms lavishly furnished. All furniture and other items were fancy, luxurious and waste. One must not forget that the building was erected during the war, where valuable material was hard to obtain. At a time, when bells were taken out of church steeples and Goering summoned housewives to give the last copper kettles and brass away, for the equipment of the "Volkshotel" on the Obersalzberg brass and chrome for door handles and toilets, copper for roof and gutters were used. Bormann's attention was especially directed to the lanterns. He disliked the golden ones, they had to be made of silver. Then he did not like the silver lanterns. They had to be made of gold! The sign "Gasthaus"



Wood — Iron and Concrete for



Platterhof", which was about 2 meters high, kept several gilders busy for several months. Finally it was disapproved by Bormann and stored in the attic! Now the letters "The Platterhof" were fastened at the southern window wall. It took several months until the fastening and gilding of the letters was completed. These are just a few example. It would lead too far if every incident would be reported. And these few accounts give already a picture of the economical situation, how money was wasted here. No further comments are necessary.

After the building was completed, released and given the name "Gästehaus Platterhof" it was not at all a "Volkshotel" as Hitler originally wanted it to be, but a luxurious hotel, which was by far too expensive for ordinary people. It became a hotel for nazi wheels.

Very soon the laborers found out that they did not work on a resort place for the population but for the party brass only. The continued growl reached the ears of Bormann. Now he announced that primarily those guests would be accepted only, who distinguished themselves during the war. But after the critique continued, Bormann found a new trick. He officially announced all buildings had to be completed in full speed within the shortest period of time. This is Hitler's desire. The war might be over soon! Then Hitler would not want to see laborers and machines on the Obersalzberg, to be able to concentrate on the peace programm to follow!

It is a pity that only a few people noticed these tricks. Those, who were intelligent enough, did not talk about it, since they were afraid of coercive actions. Some felt they were appointed for the Obersalzberg and applauded together with the others when they were told they had to fulfill their duty for their fatherland on this mountain, where the "Fuehrer" — that means Bormann — called them. But those, who still showed their disapproval and distrust as to the happenings on the mountain, were declared politically unreliable and dismissed. Someday they were drafted. If an unreliable person was indispeusable, he was permanently watched by the GESTAPO or the RSD.

Even before the Platterhof was completed the dredgers and concrete-mixing-machines worked already on other sites.

The highway passing the Platterhof in direction to Scharitzkehlalm was enlarged to make it accessible in winter, too. Here a deep valley was overbridged where the highway led to Vorderbrand. At the end of the road the Dietrich Eckarthuette was renovated and enlarged to a boardinghouse. The road Klaushoehe — Purtschellerhaus was constructed and Arbeitsdienst (Labor Service) troops had to work on the road Rossfeld-Eckersattel for years. The war, however brought these road constructions to a stop. Now, in 1955, the construction of this beautiful highway leading from the Rossfeld over the summits to the Ahornkaser will be continued.



... Hotel-Garages and Apartment-House for Employees



Opposite the Platterhof a post-office was erected. Part of the building was used as a sales-store for refreshments, tourist supplies, and souvenirs. One can say that this was the only building, which was of practical value and which was normally equipped. The "Bergschenke" adjacent to the Platterhof, had also the usual equipment of mountain inns and showed no extravagance. Primarily it served the tourist traffic. Tourists and sightseers were shocked when they saw the huge building of the Platterhof; they did not even dare to read the menu of the hotel and preferred to stay in the Bergschenke. After the Platterhof was closed for guests in 1943 and became part of the station veterans hospital Berchtesgaden, the Bergschenke was the only and therefore well frequented inn on the Obersalzberg. In the evenings it was frequented by SS-troopers, and employees of the administration and construction firms. Bormann did not permit that lectures or other political meetings of the Party were held at the inn.

It was often interesting to hear the comments of the SS-troopers, who came from the front-line, when they heard the war news. These most faithful-ones around Hitler did not hesitate to shout "humbug, nonsense". They did not care whether they were caught, since they had to expect to return to the front-line anyway after a few weeks of recreation.

Did anyone try to argue about those rebellious words, they started to fight and the mountain inn

was soon a scene of brawl. And the effect: bloody heads and damaged furniture.

The hotel garages, 130 meters long, belonged to the Platterhof. In the second floor were the rooms for about 160 hotel employees. The furniture here was practical and modern.

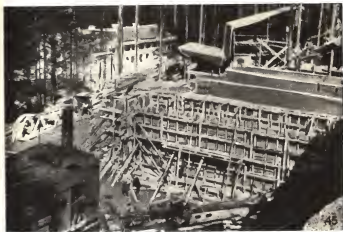
One of the big problems was the terrace hall. It was supposed to be used during peak traffic, when the restaurant rooms of the main building did not suffice.

This hall became one of the most expensive projects. It was originally planned but then forgotten. So it happened that during the construction, the just completed installation of the rest rooms, which were built-in underneath the terrace, had to be torn down and the already completed baths had to be removed. But that was not all. Bormann disagreed with the opinion of the construction firms and the brick-work had to be torn down three-times. Even the concrete base had to be blown up and removed by compressors three times. The hall was not completed until the end of the war, since the constructors were not able to satisfy Bormann's taste.

Only once during the war Hitler held a meeting of Party and Army generals in this hall to demonstrate his opinion. His speech was so impulsive that he shattered the electrical light on his reading-stand.

A building worth to be mentioned was the "Kinder-garden".

This name is erroneous. The sketch for it was called "model house". A few rooms and arcades



The Cool-and-Fuel-Supply-Store (during Construction)



The Cool-and-Fuel-Supply-Store (Front-Sight)

with garden were actually used as a nursery for children of Nazi wheels. But the larger part of the building was used as a store-room for all models of important party-buildings. Furthermore, films were stored here, which were only performed to a selected audience in the movie hall of the SS barracks or at the Berghof. An expensive system was built-in, in order to protect those films. In long halls, separated into small shelters and shelves a lightning-rod was installed, insulating every single shelter and every shelf against lightning and fire.

In connection with the Kinder-garden we want to touch the theme "HITLER AND THE CHILDREN". Hitler is said to have been a friend of children. We do not want to argue, whether this is true or not. But it is a fact that only children of the Party prominence on the Obersalzberg were allowed to meet Hitler.

Bormann led those children to Hitler to meet him. Since of course Hitler knew, whose children they were, he liked to be celebrated, adored and photographed.

Reichsminister Speer, well known as professor and designer of the Party building in Nürnberg, also wanted to take residence close to Hitler. He bought the Waltenberger Heim and had it renovated. Speer furthermore built a large and modern equipped artist studio, which he released as a children resort during the war.

The Bechsteinhaus on the Obersalzberg road was renovated and modernized. It primarily served Mussolini as residence during his visits

on the Obersalzberg. Also other prominent guests, such as Goebbels and other "Party authorities" were accommodated in this building.

How careless the construction program was, proved the large coal and fuel supply store between the settlement Hintereck and the road Platterhof — Klaushoehe.

It was built of quarry-stone and concrete by several hundred Italian laborers. Its dimensions were 28 x 28 x 14 meters.

Its capacity was 3500 tons. After half a year of work the coal and fuel supply store with its 8 shafts was ready for utilization. Bormann inspected it and with him tragic came over the building. He found the joints irregular and therefore he ordered the whole outside front to be torn down. It had to be reerected in a way that the vertical joints formed a straight line. Before Bormann had intervened, the costs for the building amounted to 400 000 Marks. These silly alternations increased the costs to an additional 370 000 Marks. This recoating made a full year of extra work necessary.

Herewith the most important constructions near the Berghof were concluded. And a new construction site was started.



XI.

SETTLEMENT KLAUS- AND BUCHENHOEHE

Parking Lot and Klaushoehe.

Approximately 1 km from the Platterhof on the road Oberau—Platterhof a large parking lot was erected for vehicles of all kind. Many thousand m³ of ground on that rocky site had to be removed. The construction in form of a terrace required an enormous amount of road construction material, which had to be transported to the Obersalzberg during months of hard labor. During the whole war millions of bricks, cement, iron, wood, machines, tools and other material were stored on this parking lot.

Near the parking lot the first larger settlement was built, the Klaushoehe, consisting of four rows with 8 houses each; in each house two to three families could be accommodated. These buildings were erected on hilly ground and were supposed to be a social achievement. Each apartment consisted of several living-, guest- and bed-rooms, a hall, a bathroom, and a modern kitchen with combined stove. The cost for one building amounted between 100 000 and 150 000 Marks. Of course only persons received such an apartment, who were faithful followers of Hitler, or at least of Bormann, and who were Bormann's favorites. The apartments were not distributed in preference



Settlement Klaushoehe



to those, who needed housing facilities most. The "social achievement" was only for the benefit of a few elects, such as high administration employees or SS sergeants. In the well equipped apartment — comparable to the home of a high official in a city — one could feel very comfortable. The cost for rent was not high, since the tenants paid only a small charge, which did not meet the high amortization and interest costs at all. This was based on a smart tactical calculation.

The buildings were built with government funds — by use of the money-printing-machine and the income tax of the population. The actual, however, low kept rent was cashed by the administration. A smart business! There was no balance account, which might have given a survey of profit or loss.

The air-raid destroyed several of these houses. Part of them were torn down after being looted. The remaining houses were renovated after the war and now serve as accommodations for refugees. These buildings were just a start, an attempt, to colonize the Obersalzberg with faithful personnel. The following will not be less interesting and notable.

The Buchenhoehe.

The Buchenhoehe was the second settlement on the Obersalzberg. While Hitler's armies were on the way to the Kaukasus mountains overshadowed by Stalingrad, and North-Africa was stormed, Bormann did not even release one of his

laborers. He wanted to continue the "war important construction program!"

He gave the order to build a new settlement on the most difficult terrain, the mountain slopes between Klaushoehe and Resten", called settlement Buchenhoehe.

The public never learnt what he had in mind by starting this huge project. Sketches of this settlement were already completed in 1941 and were kept "SECRET". Only the construction committees knew that a settlement was to be built, which by far should exceed any other realized plan on the Obersalzberg with regards to size, volume, and number of housing facilities.

The terrain consisted of rocky hills, woods, and desert, rugged by torrents. Several hundred thousands of cubicmeters of ground had to be removed in order to create a suitable site. Since there was not enough government ground available, Bormann used the old and effective method to enforce that the local owners "sold" their ground.

Woods were cut down, torrents were removed 30 to 40 meters deeper and led through cement pipes, roads were built through the whole terrain, valleys and gorges were overbridged. These were just additional projects with enormous costs Laborers received job-work wages and later on so-called efficiency wages. The buildings had to be erected with top-speed.

The following was built at the Buchenhoehe: approximately 40 apartment houses (see picture)



Construction Site Buchenhoehe (Heoter-System during Construction)
with two to four apartments each, consisting of
5 to 8 rooms;

- 1 department store with refrigerating
chambers, store rooms, garages, and so
on;
- 1 inn
- 1 Kinder-garden with terrace hall
- 1 swimming pool
- 1 school
- 1 gymnasium
- 1 large garage
- 1 transformer station
- 1 fire house, and the largest construction
- 1 central heating system.

Well informed construction experts estimated the cost for the heating system alone to 1 million Marks.

It had to provide all buildings of the settlement with warm water and hot air. In the 2 m wide tunnel, which accommodated the heating pipes, it was easy to walk from one house to the other.

The sight of the completed apartments was amazing. Even the basements were so bright and spacious that many a laborer family would have gladly accepted them as a housing facility.

The floors and bottoms of the arcades were covered with slates from Solnhofen.

An enormous amount of glasswool was used for insulating the walls. Window-frames and window-sills were made of marble. Doors, windows, porches and stairs were made of oak or other hard wood. The shelves, kitchen cabinets and so on were built-in. Most of the room-walls had a wood lining of stone pine or larch-tree.

The following figures of materials used at the Buchenhoehe will complete the picture:

20 000 hours of carpenters work were needed for the school and the gymnasium in addition to 40 000 hours of brickwork.

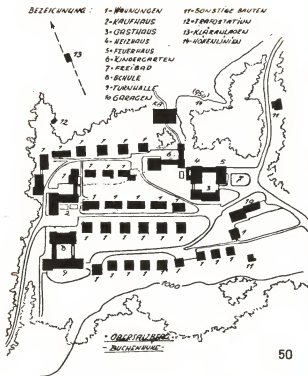
From June till July 1943 270 000 tons of iron were used for concrete works on the Settlement Buchenhoehe. Three millions of bricks and 90 000 bags of cement were also needed. Considering the enormous amounts of other construction material as there are barked timber, wood for the roofs, clay and concrete pipes, glass, tin, and copper, and further materials for the heating and

water system, the canalization, the construction of roads, the electric power and the sanitary installations, then it is certain that income tax money was wasted ruthlessly at a time, at which Bormann and his staff ought to have better thought of those, who had lost their homes by air-raids.

But not only the modern equipment, the comfort of the buildings caused the long duration of the construction works to such high costs. Part of the technical difficulties were caused by the terrain, on which the settlement Buchenhoehe was erected, which confronted even the most experienced engineers with new and complicated problems over and over again.

The ground, on which the buildings were built, was solid rock covered either with rubbles mixed with loam and large stones in variable thickness or a so-called hazel-stone. Both kinds of ground have the unfortunate characteristics to become extremely hard when dried out, so that they can only be removed by pneumatic hammers. In the open air or sprinkled with water they fall apart and become mushy-like.

The technician, who was responsible for the correctness of his calculations as to the safety of the buildings, was forced to choose unusual deep foundations, and also the normal iron value for walls, posts, supports, and ceilings had to be increased. The construction had to be done partly above and partly under the ground and the changing and sometimes moving terrain on slopes made additional levelling and concrete bases necessary.



Map of Settlement Buchenhoehe

Items:

- 1 Apartments
- 2 Store
- 3 Inn
- 4 Heater-House
- 5 Fire-House
- 6 Kinder-garden
- 7 Swimming Pool

- 8 School
- 9 Gymnasium
- 10 Garages
- 11 Other Buildings
- 12 Transformer Station
- 13 Sewer System
- 14 Elevation-Lines

The sanitary installations required a special canalization. Special settings had to be adjusted at the wells, in order to prevent any possibility that the wells might carry poisoned water.

The work continued during the winter time. In case of emergency almost all employees of the construction firms were summoned to help remove the snow-piles, which were located on trucks and transported from the site. Snowploughs and snowmills were used in addition. The removal of snow on site and roads cost about 10 000 Marks daily. The buildings in construction had to be covered with large tilts and heated with steam- and coke-stoves in order to keep on working during the cold temperature. A heater was adjusted underneath the gravel-tobblers. The water for the concrete mixing machines had to be warmed up as well as the bricks and the other construction material. Daily approximately 200 to 250 m³ of gravel had to be transported from the gravelpits to the site, after the snow was removed from pit and roads. That way it is comprehensible that the costs for construction amounted to several millions of Marks. Additional difficulties arose during the war, which finally influenced also the Obersalzberg.

Now, for the first time during the war Bormann had difficulties in obtaining construction material. In the "total war" he could not always back the reasons for the importance of his constructions. In the meantime Speer became Reichsminister for armour and war production. Several times he tried to persuade Bormann to discontinue the

construction, however, Bormann succeeded in reference to a direct order from Hitler, to enforce its completion. He desisted from continuing the construction of the settlement under his name — just to be able to complete it — and gave it to the NSV for accommodation of children from bombed-out cities. And indeed, approximately 400 children with the necessary nursing personnel were accommodated in the already completed houses.

The construction of the settlement was now slowly continued. By the air-raid on the 25th of April 1945 the work came to a complete end.

XII

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TUNNELS

It was in 1943.

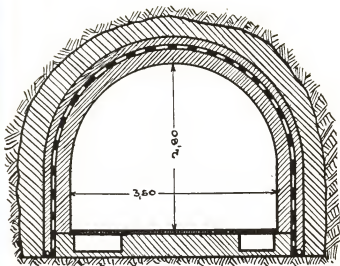
In Stalingrad and Egypt the German Army was bleeding to death. Instead of the elimination of the enemies according to Hitler's and Goebbels' propaganda-speeches, defeats had to be accepted, which decided the war. The calamitous air-war over Germany increased day by day. However, on the Obersalzberg not a word was allowed to be mentioned about „air-defense“. And in fact, nothing was done in this matter. On the contrary. Suddenly in August 1943 the words "air-defense", "air-raids", "shelter", "tunnels" and safety for the Fuehrer were the main topics. Plans were rushed, modified, changed disapproved, remade, and finally approved to construct an extensive, unique tunnel-system underneath the buildings on the Obersalzberg. Almost all other projects were postponed.

Reichsminister Speer finally succeeded in enforcing the younger men on the Obersalzberg to be drafted, which caused an enormous change in the laborer situation on the Obersalzberg. Only about 30% of the personnel were Germans, mainly key personnel, as there were engineers, architects, handicraftsmen, machine leaders and construction specialists. Only a few elderly Germans unfit for

military service were laborers. All those, who were drafted, were replaced by Czechs and Italians.

With this mixed personnel, which did not even understand the German language, and which was assisted by an SS tunnel-construction company, the construction of the tunnels on the Obersalzberg began. The first tunnel-system had to be provided for Hitler, Eva Braun, guests and adjutants, beginning at the Berghof. A second tunnel net had to be provided for Bormann and his family. Adjacent to these tunnels rooms for the administration and files, furthermore for the air-defense headquarters were planned. It was also intended to include Haus Goering in this tunnel system. However, Goering had already been precautions in 1941. Adjacent to his house he had built a small air-raid shelter with 3 m thick walls of iron-concrete. The lining of the excavated tunnels was very carefully planned. A 30 to 60 cm thick concrete lining was fastened to the walls, which was covered with cement and insulated according to a new method by some kind of roofing-felt or artificial rubber tilt. The insulation was protected by a 25 cm thick wall. The ground water was conducted to the canalization through built-in tricklestones in the concrete lining. Thick iron plates and other safety precautions were adjusted to the entrances to protect them against bombs and demolition.

The following principles were used for the construction of the tunnels: A straight corridor or stairs led so far away from the entrance that



Querschnitt-durch die Kavernen 56

Caverns — Cross-Section

a sufficient cover of 30 to 50 meters was guaranteed. Then followed a curb-stone to keep off any gusts of air after the explosion of bombs, followed by a gas lock, from where the corridor continued. On both sides of the corridor the caverns were located. The larger part of the corridors contained sub-tunnels, in which all technical systems as ventilation, electrical power, water, cables, canalization and hot-air heating was installed. Close to the entrances machine-gun turrets were erected. The rock was partly solid and good, however, it was ruptured and interweaved by loam streaks, where Hitler's tunnel had to be constructed, which made it necessary that every dug part immediately had to be supported by strong props; these had to be removed as soon as the concrete lining was fastened.

Additional tunnels were constructed for people living at the Platterhof, the SS barracks, for inhabitants of the settlements Klaus- and Buchenhoehe, and for the employees of the „Gutshof“. The construction of the tunnels was concluded with a shelter for the employees and workers of the construction firms, who lived in barracks.

The construction of the air-raid shelters began with the Berghof-tunnel. The completion of a certain part was set for the 24th of December 1943. At that date Hitler's arrival was anticipated.

However, the start was delayed, Reason: the ruptured ground. Eight weeks were left to complete the work. All available means and ways were used. The construction was speeded up in

order to stick to the set date. Every meter a mason was spanning the arches. Between the legs of the masons the laborers were crawling on hands and feet bringing in stones and mortar. Carpenters, insulators, electricians, telephone and other installators had to work close to each other.

Thus, in about eight weeks a 130 m long tunnel with adjacent caverns was completed beginning with the first mixing of concrete and ending with the polished inlaid floor including wainscoting and furnishing. Originally only plain tunnels were planned. But now special wishes had to be considered. The security service demanded the installation of machine guns. For aesthetic reasons the architects did not renounce marble, valuable wood-wainscoting, air-conditioning, rugs, dressing-cabinets, a. s. o. Bormann wanted to have the headquarters removed further below; Goering demanded to have his private tunnel connected with the rest of the tunnel system. But when it was that far, Bormann refused to have his part connected with that of the Reichsmarschall. And indeed, both tunnels remained separated by about 10 meters of solid ground.

Now the ventilation system was not sufficient any more. Therefore, reconstructions and new excavations started. When everything was completed, someone remembered that another room was needed. Again the ground had to be excavated. Now the various house-keepers uttered their wishes. They desired supply-rooms. The dog-warden needed a special room for Hitler's wolf-dog, which caused certain reflections by the

architects, whether dogs-hair would contain gas, whether a special ventilation circuit had to be built-in, or whether simple filters would be adequate. The telephone experts found that the cable diameter was not sufficient, therefore new enlargements were necessary.

Eva Braun wanted to have an own bathroom. The cooks expressed their wishes. Therefore complete kitchens and a refrigeration system had to be installed. Special rooms had to be built for storing pictures, records, and libraries. Bormann had his special dining-room.

Finally, shortly before the tunnels were completed the anti-aircraft headquarters demanded a special room for themselves. Therefore cables were placed through a special shaft with complicated safety precautions. An emergency power system also had to be installed, which actually did not operate during the air-raid.

It is easy to comprehend that the tunnel-system underneath Camp Antenberg did not cause the same difficulties. It was really just an emergency shelter against air-raids, as they were constructed throughout the country. At the end of this chapter more will be told about it.

First let us give a **summary of the air-raid shelters on the Obersalzberg,**

which after one and a half years of construction work had the following measurements:

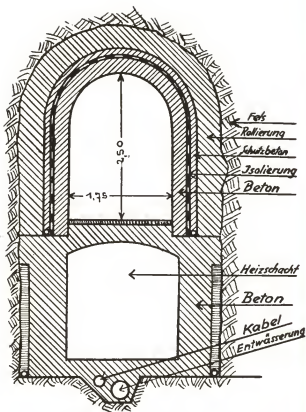
Transverse Section of the tunnel-corridors:

1.20 to 1.75 m wide, 2.50 m high;

Transverse Section of the Rooms:

2.00 to 3.50 m wide and deep, 2.50 m high.

Tunnels	Tunnel corridors in meters	Rooms amount	Areal
Berghof Tunnel			
Hitler's rooms			
Offices — Machine Rooms			
Signal Rooms	450	17	745 qm
Bormann Tunnel			
Private Rooms and offices	200	5	275 qm
FLAK Command			
Flak Office			
Accommodations for Dependants and Civilians	385	11	615 qm
Goering Tunnel			
Private Rooms — Offices			
Adjutant	240	10	400 qm
SS-Tunnels			
Accommodations and Supply Rooms	200	8	520 qm
Platterhof Tunnel			
Accommodation for guests resp. hospital inmates			
Personnel and Supply Rooms	235	12	745 qm
Tunnel Klaushöhe			
Accommodation for Inhabitants of Klaushoehe	800	10	700 qm
Tunnel Antenberg			
Accommodation for Inmates of the Camp	265	6	120 qm
Total:	2775	79	4120 qm



Querschnitt durch die Hauptstollen

55

Main-Tunnels — Cross-Section

Tunnel-Corridor — Cross-Section

Rock
Protection-Concrete
Insulation
Concrete

Heater-Shaft
Concrete
Cable
Conalization

Additional projects were the tunnels at the Buchenhoehe and the large tunnel for the Gutshof, which, however, could not be completed. Bormann claimed not to have enough underground space, since Goering had more than he did. He therefore confiscated several rooms from the FLAK Command, and filled cabinet after cabinet with heavy brasslocks, with silver candle-sticks, silver plates, jewelry, plenty of clothing, the well-known 36 tailor-made suits, uniforms, books, pictures, e. t. c.

Food, fat, sugar, flour, cans, cloth, linen were stored in the Bormann tunnel in such an excessive amount, that he and his family, according to the estimate of an expert, could have lived on that and dressed for 200 years!

His tunnel rooms were equipped as follows:

The inlaid floor was covered with heavy rugs. The walls showed first class wainscoting, doors and door-frames were shining in polishing-laquer. The kitchen was equipped with combined ovens, wash- and bathrooms were furnished lavishly. A switchboard with 800 connections was just sufficient! The offices were equipped with hard-wood furniture, heavy desks, file-cabinets, shelves, upholstered arm chairs, etc. Not to forget the safes, which were built into the rocks! Living-rooms, bedrooms and nursery were similar to those in his house. Many of his caverns were filled with unimaginable amounts of valuable oil-paintings.

In view of the unique underground air-raid shelter, which was constructed for the Ober-

salzberg wheels, and which was described above, we should not forget to describe in short words the tunnel which was built for ordinary people, such as the employees and laborers of the Obersalzberg in the Antenberg Barracks.

1000 persons, men and women, Germans and foreigners, had only 385 square meters available for themselves. Water steadily dripped through the uncompleted walls. There were almost no doors: those few were just made of rough logs. Simple benches, insufficient in number, were the only comfort. No space was available for bags with the necessary emergency items. In some tunnels the ground was muddy. During alert the laborers preferred to remain outside. To the Obersalzberg prominence the lives of the working population were as low in value as those of the frontline soldiers. There is hardly a more drastic example to show how the "Volksgemeinschaft" in the "blessed vicinity" of the "Fuehrer" actually looked like.

XIII

OTHER GREAT PLANS

In summer 1944 Hitler was on the Obersalzberg for the last time. He looked like an old man, was bent forward while walking either keeping his arm behind his back or holding a walking stick in his hand for support. Only during official receptions he tried to walk erectly as in former days. Shortly after he departed from the mountain for the last time, the order was given to remove the tunnel entrance in such a way that Hitler had not to climb stairs anymore. From his house an elevator should lead directly down to the main tunnel. But his plan was not carried out any more. As many other precautionary preparations this plan proved that the brass reckoned with the possibility that the war might come to the Obersalzberg and to the Berchtesgaden country.

They started to build an evacuation camp, since they had to reckon with the destruction of many laborers homes in case of an air-raid.

In the court-yard of the Berchtesgaden Mountain-Troopers barracks the construction of a large tunnel was started, which was supposed to serve as a shelter for officials and employees of the Berchtesgaden Reichskanzlei and for the Army-staff. But this construction plan did not go any further than to ground works.

Underneath the already completed tunnel system on the Obersalzberg a second one with the same dimensions, only 50 meters further below was planned. This construction was started from several points. No doubt, the world would have found the most impressive fortress- and tunnel-project realized in Berchtesgaden, if the war would have lasted for one more year. A phantastic sketch had already been designed.

Nevertheless, a tunnel was planned for several thousand people, for an unusual big supply, an ammunition store room, and for a parking lot for more than 100 vehicles.

The tunnel entrance should have become 500 meters long and so wide, that two cars should easily be able to drive in both directions. At the end of this tunnel the main shelter-system was planned, which at least would have been covered with 100 meters of solid rocks.

In fact, this project was started. But that was all. Fortunately, the start was worth the labor, since this tunnel saved the lives of 200 children during the air-raid on the Obersalzberg.

In spite of all these tunnels and further precautions-it seemed that Bormann did not put faith in their security.

As his retreat place he had chosen "Schluchsee" in the Black Forests. A jewish estate was confiscated and Bormann built a house similar to that on the Obersalzberg with material from the Obersalzberg. Engineers and laborers from the Obersalzberg, who were not drafted on account of their "important work", were transferred to

Schluchsee. After completion of the buildings in Schluchsee, Bormann brought his most valuable possessions to that place. Bormann's children, who went to school in Berchtesgaden, told in their childish innocence among other truths: "Our Daddy said, we don't have to be afraid. In case planes drop bombs on the Obersalzberg, we shall drive to Schluchsee. And if we should lose the war, then the Americans and Russians will not catch us, either. Then we shall fly to Japan."

Was this only children's talk?

The Laborers on the Obersalzberg.

All workers lived in barracks. In one room about 18 laborers were accommodated. Each laborer had a bed with a cushion, blankets, and a cabinet at his disposal. Wash- and bathrooms were available also. The construction firms were responsible for the cleanliness and orderliness in the rooms and were anxious to get rid of all noxious vermin. Camp canteens were providing food. The food was good, but it did not vary. Besides his tariff wage each laborer received daily 1.00 Mark separation-allowance, and also daily an additional 0.50 Mark Obersalzberg-allowance.

Of course, the long separation from their families was very disturbing for the laborers. Depending on the distance from his home-town each employee received a free travel ticket and a few days leave every four weeks. Two SS physicians were in charge of the medical care of the workers, and did their duty according to military rules.

The laborers were treated very differently in regards to their composition! For any misbehavior, as there were: extended leave absence or absence without leave, they were sentenced to wage deductions up to the equivalence of one week labor, or transfer to lower grade and withdrawal of the ration cards for food and tobacco. It is not necessary to go into further details about such a punishment, since everybody knows what this meant in wartime when practically everything was rationed. Besides, if passive resistance was found, the punishments were even stricter. The SS held raids in the barracks and prisons were filled with workers. The fact, that one prison administrator committed suicide at the end of the war, being afraid to be forced to make an account of his actions, proved that the treatment was not always human.

These incidents were really a shame, they have to be strictly condemned and there could be said more about them. But on this occasion we do not want to go into details, no matter whether the orders of the chiefs or the own initiative of a few "Little Hitlers" were responsible for these actions. There was so much injustice done with the expelling of millions of Germans from the eastern parts of Germany that the incidents on the Obersalzberg must appear harmless. We will leave this to the historians for recording.

But one thing is certain. The construction firms were not guilty as to those incidents. They had no power against Bormann's orders or the encroachments of some people. At all times they

did everything to keep good contact with the laborers, which is indicated by the fact, that all the laborers, Germans as well as foreigners, were loyal to their construction chiefs at the end of the war.

In connection with this account it may be stated **that it is not true**, as was reported now and then, that during the war 10 000 laborers were accommodated in miserable barracks behind barbed-wire on the Obersalzberg. Also their food did not consist of left-overs from the kitchens of the SS barracks.

Furthermore it is not true that **concentration-camp companies** had to work on the Obersalzberg. A chicanery or mistreatment of KZ prisoners by Mrs. Goering — as was reported — cannot have happened. On the contrary. Mrs. Goering gave several laborers, who had to work at her place, a good meal. She very often chatted with them, asking them about their families and how they felt. On Christmas some of those men received toys from her out of Edla's toy cabinet. Therefore she was well liked. This is to serve the truth!

The 3000 laborers, Germans and foreigners, had all freedom during their spare time.

XIV

THE LAST EVENTS

Winter 1944—45.

The Obersalzberg roads and construction sites are covered with snow. Shivering and sullen looking people go after their business. The 6th war winter has begun and fills the hearts of those who are living and working on the Obersalzberg with little confidence. A regular working time has become impossible for a long time. Daily, strong squadrons of American airplanes fly over the mountains. From nearby Salzburg rising smoke from the air-raids is to be seen. One can hear the thunder of the detonations from Linz, Muehldorf, and Munich. In vain the FLAK shoots from their mountain gun-positions, at which juveniles of the Labor Service are on duty. Again and again work on the construction sites is interrupted by alerts and crossing enemy-airplanes for several hours. No night passes, during which the people do not have to dash from their homes and barracks down into the safe tunnels.

During the day time one can only look into irritated and anxious faces. The war finally starts effecting the Obersalzberg, too. The construction work suffers considerably under these interruptions. The construction material is getting short. Gasoline is running out. The delivery firms are

bombed out. The front-line is coming nearer and nearer. In Bormann's head is confusion. He gives orders after orders concerning air-defense and evacuation. Files are brought to safety. "His" art treasures are crated and transported away. The firms are ordered to decentralize their material and tools. But Bormann starts a new construction project, which can only be completed after years! The architects are having arguments about door-fittings and furniture rims of the tunnels. The telephone connections to Berlin and Munich are not functioning any more; neither does the accounting process. The accounting administration is bombed out and evacuated. On the Obersalzberg nobody is allowed to see dark into the future. We are losing the war? What an idea! Who dares to say so? Wait — is the slogan — wait and see! The Fuehrer still has a secret weapon! Then everything will change.

This change is coming fast!

The "Volkssturm" is formed.

On the 11th November 1944 Bormann orders the formation of a battalion of the "Volkssturm" on the Obersalzberg. This is carried out. An SS-Obersturmbannfuehrer is appointed commander, an "Obersturmfuehrer" becomes organizer.

Exclusively young untrained architects and handicraftsmen are used as company-, platoon- and group-leaders. The Volkssturm-men consist of old soldiers of the first and second world-war. From the beginning the Volkssturm-men did not take this draft seriously. The whole idea was absurd and remained a simple and harmless soldier play.



After the Air-Raid on the 25th of April 1945. Gaering-hill, ruins of Barmann-hause, Haus Gaering, the greenhouse, the SS-barracks, left: gymnasium, right: administration building.
(Own Photo)



Ruins of Platterhof and SS-Barracks with view to the Watzmann Mountain
Photo Lachner

The "Volkssturm" service worked out considerably well. Here Bormann acted generously. Every service was paid as normal work. The training was not too hard. The men were transported to their place of training on trucks. The duty on Sunday was disliked because the only day off had to be sacrificed.

The training program consisted of shooting with rifles and machine guns, marching in the fields, and listening to lectures. During alert hours the "Volkssturm" only had to guard the tunnels and the foreign workers in the tunnels.

The Last Local Group of the NSDAP.

It sounds strange that on the 20th of April 1945 -- Hitler's birthday -- the last local group of the NSDAP was founded on the Obersalzberg by a special ceremony. Hitler and Bormann had not thought this action necessary until that time, but in those April days, when American troops already advanced into Northern Bavaria, they suddenly rushed it.

The Administration Obersalzberg scheduled a large rally in the Theater Hall. For the last time Kreisleiter Stredele made a propaganda speech for the "Third Reich". The Hall was filled up to its capacity by members of the SS, the Administration, the Volkssturm, and by all employees and workers, who were ordered to participate.

Gauleiter Giessler said that from this spot of the "holy mountain", from which so many blessings came to the "Great-German fatherland", he will bring new encouragement and faith to his dear Munich population, who bear all air-raids



Haus Bormann after the destruction



Ruins of Landhaus Gaering

with pride and unbent strength. Stredele concluded his speech by saying: "There will be a miracle soon, Hitler himself will be this miracle."

The result of this last propaganda action has not become known. The new local group existed only for four days.

Then came the miracle! **The End!**

The Bombs Fall.

Wednesday, the 25th of April 1945. The Obersalzberg is still covered with snow till about 900 m a. s. l. The rising day seems to become one of the first beautiful spring days of the year. The cold winter days are gone. Cloudless and in wonderful blue the sky arches above the Berchtesgaden country. Everybody knows that this day will not pass without an alert. Within the last weeks, no day, no night passes without the arrival of enemy-planes. The only question is what day and what time the attack on the Obersalzberg will take place, as has already been announced by Radio London.

At 0930 pre-alert is announced, a few moments later alert! In great haste the laborers cease to work. Faster than ever before, people rush down to the tunnels. At 1000 hours inferno starts. With throttled engines the first wave of American bombers races over the Hohe Goell mountain; bombs of the largest calibers are dropped. The FLAK opens up without being able to aim, then ceases forever. The first bombs fall down on the area of the Buchen- and Klaushöhe. New buildings were destroyed, roads damaged, forests and



The Berghof after the Air-Raid



fields torn to pieces. Big clouds of smoke hide the whole area, followed by a strange silence, interrupted by cries of fear and pain. The last latecomers dash down into the tunnels.

It is half an hour later. The second wave of bombers appear. The main attack is getting under way.

Without pause heavy bombs are dropped on the Obersalzberg area. And this for one whole hour! The annihilation is performed very thoroughly.

The Berghof is hit, one side of it is destroyed completely. The tinroof is torn to pieces and hangs partly in the air. The interior looks like being demolished by an earth-quake. Goering's and Bormann's houses lay heavily damaged in brimstone colored clouds of smoke. The SS barracks are completely wiped out, the Platterhof is heavily damaged, a chaotic scene!

The foreigners camp Riemerfeld is blown down to the ground. The parking lot, forests and the roads to the Platterhof almost look like a moon-landscape. The theater hall is heavily damaged. A warehouse is on flames, enormous amounts of tools and material are destroyed. Part of the barracks of the laborer camp Antenberg is blasted. The whole area is ruptured by bomb-craters. Countless trucks and cars are torn to pieces on the roads.

However, the bomshelters and tunnels were not damaged at all. Out of 3500 people, who witnessed the air-raid, the total loss was only 6 dead and several injured.

XV

THE END

After this annihilation the inner collapse immediately followed. A large part of the laborers, who were without accommodations after the destruction of their camps, were released to their homes and transported from the mountain. The children in the children-homes were evacuated together with their nursing personnel. Mrs. Bormann with her children left the Obersalzberg to escape to Italy over the Alps, accompanied by Ministerialrat Dr. Hummel, Bormann's deputy. Goering has already been on the Obersalzberg for some time. A general arriving from Berlin reports that Hitler in his Berlin headquarters in raging, crying, and biting into rugs. Goering believes that Hitler has become imbecile. He sends the well-known radiogram to Berlin, he would be willing, as Hitler's deputy, to end the war under all circumstances at least against the western powers, if no other order would reach him within the next 24 hours. Instead of an answer, the order comes that Goering is dismissed from all his duties, ranks and functions, politically as well as military, and that he is to be arrested.

The SS commander on the Obersalzberg, who for months is known to disagree with Hitler's imbecile politics and Bormann's goals, arrests

Goering, but also protects him simultaneously. Colonel Brauchitsch, Goering's Adjutant, is convinced that Bormann is the executive power behind this order, and assists Goering, too. Goering's driver even considers to ask the Air-Force, stationed in Berchtesgaden, for help. But Goering does not want this.

Thus the arrested Reichsmarschall witnesses the air-raid in his private home. Mrs. Goering also remains on the mountain. But she is hardly permitted to see her husband. Since she is afraid her husband might be liquidated, she asks Hitler by radiogram, to be liquidated together with him. She hereby refers to Hitler's promise to fulfill her any desire. Days of expectation come. — Goering's friends, Reichsleiter Bouhler and Colonel Brauchitsch are arrested. On the 27th of April 1945 Goering and his family are taken to Schloß Mauterndorf in Austria.

The war is coming to an end, and the allied troops approached Berchtesgaden. Now the anxious question arose, whether Berchtesgaden and the Obersalzberg would be defended or surrendered.

Sooner than expected this depression vanished. The Obersalzberg SS-Commander kept his promise given to the Landrat... "Don't worry, when time comes, I am going to withdraw". He did, and with him the SS-troops. The Administration Obersalzberg also disappeared leaving debts in the amount of 17 million Marks to the construction firms and handicraftsmen.

Captain Wagner from the mountain troopers issued discharge papers to all his soldiers. The Volkssturm units were also discharged; but again another danger arose. From Kesselring's headquarters in Koenigssee was learned that Berchtesgaden and Bad Reichenhall would be defended. Since in Bad Reichenhall about 17 veteran hospitals and children-evacuation-homes were located, the Landrat after two personal conferences with Feldmarschall Kesselring, succeeded in persuading the General to remove the defense-line to Hallthurm, but Berchtesgaden was supposed to be part of the "fortress-circle Tirol". However, it is believed that this tactical action was just determined to give the Berchtesgaden troops enough time to withdraw toward the south.

While the military authorities avoided useless fighting, the political chiefs were irresponsible enough to drive the population of the district into disaster. Kreisleiter Stredele prepared a pamphlet with the following proclamation:

Women and Children into the Mountains
Men to the Arms!

The Landrat of Berchtesgaden (who now has been reelected) supported by some brave and valiant local people, was able to prevent the distribution of those pamphlets. Stredele tried to urge the Landrat to move with his staff into the building of the Kreisleitung, which the Landrat refused to do. Later it was learnt that a mine was put into the same building, which exploded after the occupation forces had moved in.

Fortunately, nobody was killed. Unthinkable disaster would have followed. On the mountain the situation was chaotic. Tunnel-entrances and buildings were unguarded. People came, some of them even with horse carriages, to loot the interior. Huge amounts of food, linen, clothes, shoes, china, soap, and others lay in front of the wondering eyes, and found new owners. Works of art were burnt or taken away. In Bormann's supply-tunnel, people stood knee-deep in butter, sugar, flour and other food. It was horrible and it seemed that nobody would ever be able to stop this.

Then the Landrat authorized the chief of the biggest construction firm on the Obersalzberg, Mr. Georg Grethlein, to surrender the Obersalzberg to the occupation forces. Grethlein also succeeded in bringing back order into the situation on the Obersalzberg by the help of the rest of his employees, consisting of about 300 Germans, 100 Czechs, and 30 Italian laborers.

On the 4th of May 1945 SS troopers, who remained behind, poured gasoline into the Berghof and set it on fire.

The Landrat went to meet the arriving American troops, the 101st Airborne Division, to inform them of Berchtesgaden's surrender. At the Castle-square the mayor, Mr. Sandrock, officially surrendered the Berchtesgaden village to the US Commander.

At about 6 o'clock in the evening of that same day American troops occupied the Obersalzberg, they were followed by colored French units.

The population of Berchtesgaden as well as all Germans had to bear the same fate and sufferings as human beings of all European nations had to bear by occupation forces during the war.

Let us not talk about this disastrous time.

GEORG GRETHLEIN AND JOSEF LOHR

Georg Grethlein, chief of the biggest construction firm on the Obersalzberg — Labor Association Philipp Holzmann, Held & Franke (ARGE-Obersalzberg) was a gentleman of high genius, an expert in his profession, a personality, who always had an open ear and friendly considerations to all problems of his employees. He was a friend and benefactor to all German as well as to all foreign laborers. Georg Grethlein never forgot to support the families of those employees, who were drafted. Every month they received their monthly allowances and gift parcels from his firm. He took care of the entertainment of his employees during their time-off and procured special rations, clothing, cigarettes, etc. Through his concerned friendliness towards all his employees, he was well liked by everyone.

The fatherly friend of his employees was killed on the 5th of May 1945. On this day the co-driver Josef Lohr, a loyal employee, was shot by a drunk occupation soldier.

Georg Grethlein, shortly before having been appointed by the Military Government to keep



Sepp Loehr †



Georg Grethlein †

up order and peace on the Obersalzberg, wanted to help Lohr by explaining to the soldier, what he had done to a simple and absolutely harmless laborer. But he only received deadly shots as an answer.

Thus this crime killed, quite unnecessarily two good human beings at the end of the war, who were the least to deserve such a fate. In the mountain grave-yard in Berchtesgaden they both are buried together in one grave.

Since that day almost every year the former employees hold a mourning ceremony in memory of those two men, which proves how high they were esteemed. This is written in memory to those two men.

XVI

THE OBERSALZBERG TO-DAY

It is really hard to decide, whether the public took more interest in the "Holy Mountain" now or during Hitler's time. Towards the end of 1951 and the beginning of 1952 long reports about the Obersalzberg could be read in every newspaper.

And what caused these reports? We also want to write about the reason of it objectively.

The Obersalzberg with all its buildings, ruins, tunnels, and Hitler's former Tea House was still confiscated by the occupation forces. For years only occupation soldiers or foreigners, the latter with special permission of the local occupation office only, were permitted to enter the former "sovereign territory".

After the war, especially after the currency reform, the influx of health seeking- and summer guests increased. Who wants to blame those people, while they were visiting the Berchtesgaden country when they wanted to see the place, on which the historical events of the last decade were determined? And Berchtesgaden, the population of which has to make its living mainly through the tourist trade, tried everything to have the Obersalzberg released by the occupation forces, who were finally willing to agree. They released the Obersalzberg area under the con-

dition to eliminate the ruins of the Berghof, the Goering- and Bormann houses.

Berchtesgaden seemed to accept this decision. But there were also circles, who, for several reasons, tried to win the public for the preservation of the ruins.

Moreover, some guides coming from distant parts of Germany, made mourning speeches in front of an audience on the Obersalzberg about the unfortunate end of the once "holy place", and talked of "reawakening from the ruins". One of these "well-informed guides" on his tours even told of Hitler's torture-chamber, which in reality never existed. The newspapers reported hereof. Some of them exaggerated. And once some fanatics "happy and gay" even sang the "Horst Wessel song" on this "sacred spot".

No wonder, that finally the occupation forces as well as the German government were of the opinion that political demonstrations could only be avoided by eliminating the ruins. This decision was used as propaganda material by followers of new political parties.

There followed strong protests, press-attacks, conferences, minister visits and orders. But for political reasons, both occupation forces and government enforced the removal of the ruins. Only the "Tea-House" on the Kehlstein mountain, which was not damaged by bombs, remained and is used as described in chapter "Tea-House on the Kehlstein Mountain". The remnants of the Berghof and of House Goering and House Bor-



The Bergshof ... 30th April 1952 at 1705 hours Photo Zeitz/Koenigssee
The End ... What still had remained — is blasted and gone forever!

mann were torn down, as well as the ruins of the SS barracks and the adjacent buildings.

The enormous tunnel system, its furniture as well as that of the Platterhof had been stolen during the chaos of the first weeks after the war, was plugged with brick work by order of the occupation forces.

(Note of the author: This decision is uncomprehendable, since nowhere on the Obersalzberg the public would have seen more of the enormous construction works and the waste of money than in these tunnels. And besides, every year the district Berchtesgaden or the community Salzberg, even at a low entrance fee, could make quite some money, which could be used for building apartment houses.

Preserved was only the RSD or Criminal Police building, badly damaged by bombs, which was given back to the former proprietor and renovated as "Gasthaus zum Tuerken", and furthermore the large building "Platterhof".

The latter, also considerably damaged by bombs, for many years offered a sad picture of destruction, until some years ago, the occupation forces took care of it.

The building was thoroughly renovated, all rooms and restaurants modified and modernly equipped. Now it serves the US Army as "Hotel General Walker" for the accommodation of American guests.

It is hoped that from now on a politically quiet and peaceful time will develop that the hope, which so many people carry in their hearts

might become true: Pension Moritz or the "Platterhof" might regain its old reputation, as it was the desire of its great founder

Mauritia Mayer.

And one more thing might be said:

Painter Georg Waltenberger painted a wonderful picture, a relief, which can be seen in the reception hall of the Salt Mines. It represents the Obersalzberg decades ago, completely untouched by political and constructional events during Hitler's time. The picture offers a look into the interior of the Salt Mines and shows the Obersalzberg in its former beauty. And underneath this picture the following words are written:

"May the Obersalzberg become again what it was, a place of recreation and a home for mountain farmers and miners."

This is our wish, too.

To the honor and the benefit of the whole Berchtesgaden country and our guests.

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Josef
Geiß

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Berchtesgaden